Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

GEMS OF HIDDEN WISDOM

A quintessence of Indian Scriptures



NARINDER NATH

N 64 G

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

GEMS OF HIDDEN WISDOM

A quintessence of Indian Scriptures



NARINDER NATH

N 64 G

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

Today, a busy and stressed professional has little time to go back and read the ancient scriptures of India, which define a way for leading a happy, stress free and virtuous life. How many of the young professionals would remember the sayings in our Vedas, Upnishads and BhagvadGita ? This book is my attempt to provide, with a short summary and analysis of our scriptures and introducing them to the sayings of the Great Gurus of ancient and Modern India across all religions and sects, which will inspire every reader. The simple presentation of the complex principles enunciated in old treatises will guide the young , to apply the learning for leading a stress free and purposeful happy and healthy life. I do believe that this would also help young mothers and fathers to introduce this great hidden wealth of India to their children for the benefit of future generations. Teachers and students will also find them interesting and useful. A path to lead an eternal blissful and happy life has been beautifully illustrated in chapter 5. This is a book not to be missed in the present scenario

ISBN 81-7017-520-8

Rs. 149/-

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

16505
R.R.M.R.

L-6.
S-3
B-197

GEMS OF HIDDEN WISDOM

From Indian Scriptures and
Teachings of Saints and Sages

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

To
My Father
Sri Ram Labhayaji
Who instilled in me the spirit of integrity and truthfulness

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

6 3 2 3 0

GEMS OF HIDDEN WISDOM

From Indian Scriptures and
Teachings of Saints and Sages

cat- 16540
11-05-12

Narinder Nath

30-04-25

ABHINAV PUBLICATIONS
abhinav publications
NEW DELHI

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

730.954
N64G

First published in India 2010

© Narinder Nath

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording or by any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publishers.

Publishers
Shakti Malik
Abhinav Publications
E-37 Hauz Khas
New Delhi-110016 (INDIA)
Phones: 26566387, 26524658, 41655758
Fax: 91-11-26857009
e-mail: shakti@nde.vsnl.net.in
website: http://www.abhinavexports.com

ISBN 81-7017-520-8

Lasertypeset by
A & D Co.
Delhi-110053

Printed at
D.K. Fine Art Press Pvt. Ltd.
Ashok Vihar, Delhi

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

My salutations

To Swami Dayanand, Swami Vivekananda, Sri Tiruvalluvar, Sri Aurobindo, and many others whose teachings may continue to awaken the souls of all and

To the Martyrs who laid down their lives to win us freedom and to safeguard it. May God keep their souls in peace.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

INVOCATION—OM TAT SAT

OM

Diverse courses of Worship
From varied springs of fulfilment,
Have mingled in your meditation.
The manifold revelation of the
joy of the Infinite,
Has given form to a shrine of
Unity in your life.
Where from far and near arrive
Salutations,
To which I join mine own.
—Rabindranath Tagore

NAMASKAR MANTRA

(The Fivefold Obeisance)

Salutations to the Prophets (Arhats)
Salutations to the Liberated Souls
(Siddhas)
Salutations to the Preceptors
(Acharyas)
Salutations to the religious instructors
(Upadhyayas)
Salutations to all the Saints (Sadhus)
of the world
This sublime fivefold salutation
(Namaskar mantra) destroys all sins and
is supremely auspicious.

Vasudhaiv Kutumbhakam (the whole world is one family)

Bahujana sukhaya bahujana hitaya(let us seek the welfare of all—let all be happy)

Let us pray for peace in the world

Seek to live in harmony with all your
neighbours
and at peace with thy brethren. Peace
and love
should reign throughout the world.
The most
God will guide men to peace.
If they will heed him,
He will lead them from the
Darkness of war to the light

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

should reign throughout the world. Darkness of war to the light of peace – Prophet Mohamad[4]

The most High God seeks Peace among his people.

CONFUCIOUS [3]

Jesus is the Prince of Peace. He came to this earth, to bring peace to all men. The peacemaker is blessed and shall be a child of God. We should seek the way of peace and finally come to peace with God. Extract from the Bible.[5]

NOTES (1) From thus spake Sri Ramakrishna published by Sri Ramakrishna Math, Chennai.

(2) From thus spake Lord Mahavir – IBID-

(3 TO 5) Taken from Unity in Diversity by O.P. Ghai

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

CONTENTS

	Dedication	2
	Invocation	7
	Preface	11
	Acknowledgements	13
1.	A Panoramic View of Life and Death	15
2.	Our Scriptures Manu-Smiriti and Upanishads	29
3.	Bhagavatam—A Quintessence	63
4.	Quintessence of Bhagvad Gita	95
5.	Path to an Eternal Blissful and Happy Life	117
6.	Teachings of our Sages, Saints and Guiding Souls of Modern India	133
	Notes and References	185
	Bibliography	191
	Index	193

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

PREFACE

Max Muller states that reason and comparative study of religion declare that God gave His knowledge to mankind from His first appearance on the earth.

At present there is an imperative need to restore a sense of balance and profundity in a world attuned to immediate material success at all costs, torn and alienated as it is from the great heritage of ancient wisdom, and fragmented in its vision and interest due to narrow focus on professional excellence and consumer oriented lifestyle. To remedy the situation, besides other measures like good governance, changes in the judicial system, and election procedures we need to develop the conscience of the individuals, by laying more emphasis on the value based education, promotion of enlightenment through the study of religion and teachings of our saints and sages. This will make us understand the meaning, purpose and goal of human life and awaken our consciousness.

Here I would like to express my thanks to Ramakrishna Math Hyderabad for permiting me to take some extracts from their book "SAINT DARSHAN" a treatise on teachings of saints and sages.

Innumerable books on religion and philosophy are there but unfortunately today's lifestyle and cut-throat competition do not permit an individual any time to read lengthy texts. I had the opportunity to visit several countries and on the basis of my discussions with several people, I felt there is a need to bring out quintessence of our ancient wisdom lying hidden in

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

the Vedas, Upanishads, Manu-smriti, Bhagavatam and Bhagvad Gita which could give a broad idea to the common reader who is short of time. I have, therefore, made an attempt to bring out the salient features contained in these voluminous documents in a few pages as to give a brief idea about the richness of our scriptures. The teachings of these scriptures are secular and not confined to any particular creed. They are universal and equally applicable to all people at all times. They contain eternal spiritual truths and are embodiment of divine knowledge. The chapters on panorama of life, way to eternal happiness, sages and guiding souls will be of special interest. I hope this brief account will enlighten the readers and awake an interest in them to go for detailed reading. Any response from the readers by way of comments will be greatly appreciated by me.

15.4.2010
Bangalore

Narinder Nath

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I acknowledge with gratitude the eminent authors Pt. Satyakam Vidyalankar, Dr. B.R. Kishore, Dr. Karan Singh, Swami Vivekananda, Swami Ranganathnanda, Jaidayal Goyandaka and A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada whose works I have been reading for the last many years and consulted in the preparation of this book. I am equally am grateful to Ramakrishna Math Chennai, Ramakrishna Math Hyderabad, Vivekananda Institute of Human Excellence, Ramakrishna Math Kolkata and to all other institutions and authors whose names have been given in the notes and references at the end, particularly to Shri D. N. Malhotra, publisher of the Holy Vedas (Clarion Books), I am also grateful to Shri Vishwa Nathji of Rajpal and Sons Delhi Srimati Swatantra Lata Sharma, president and Sneh Rakhra, vice-president, Arya Samaj, Indranagar, Bangalore and S.P. Kumar president, Arya Samaj, Marathali, Bangalore for motivating me to study the Vedas in detail as a true follower of Swami Dayanandji.

I would also like to thank the printers and especially Shakti Malik of Abhinav Publications who made this book a reality in a record time. I am highly grateful to my daughter Mukta Arora and son Puneet Kumar and Prem Kumar, my son-in-law, who despite their busy office schedule contributed a lot in the preparation of this book and to my wife Mrs. Chander Kanta for giving me full cooperation and support.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

Chapter 1

A Panoramic View of Life and Death

What is the purpose of life?
What is the end product that we want to see in our life?

— Sri Ravi Shankar[1]

We all came to this world gifted with innocence and for a specific purpose not known to us. We travel a path sometimes smooth and sometimes thorny. We pass through periods sometimes peaceful and sometimes turbulent full of anxiety. At the appointed time we depart to unknown goals—merge in dust again. So this is the panorama of life. Ultimately we leave behind footprints of what we have contributed to the world the people. This question brings meaning to our life.

Every man's life is a fable and full of varied experiences. So has been mine.

I call myself as an 'iota' (infinitesimal zero), because when I compare myself with this infinite universe I am like a grain of sand on the beach of Arabian Sea.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

What a unique universe the Almighty Creator has created. There are planets after planets, millions of miles away, millions of years have passed but still man has not been able to explore the mystery of their existence. God created this universe. Scientists say that billions of years ago a big-bang explosion occurred to bring into existence energy, space, time and matter.

Same is the case with the unique human body the creator has bestowed us; despite hundreds of years of research man has been unable to know the mystery of the human engine—say the human brain which has millions of cells.

If we question ourselves as to "What is this body? Who am I? What is the purpose of this creation? What is the purpose of my coming here? What have my predecessors achieved and where have they gone and with what after toiling for their whole life?"

There are many questions such as—Where did the universe come from, and how? If there is a creator what is he like? What is the relationship between the created and the creator? What happens to us when we die? Do we exist after our death? Did we exist before our birth? Who is God? Has anybody seen him? The answers to these are that just as we cannot see electricity passing through our cables, we can only see its effect; similarly "God cannot be seen, he can only be realised through devotion and meditation." Many saints like Swami Vivekananda, Aurobindo, Buddha,

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

and Ramakrishna have realised Him through deep meditation.

God is supreme. According to Hindu mythology Brahma is the creator, Vishnu the sustainer of beings and Rudra (Lord Shiva) the destroyer. The supreme, all-pervasive entity Brahma has been described in various Upanishads.

An important aspect of Hindu thought is the concept of the 'Avataras' i.e. descent of God in human form. In keeping with its concept of cyclic time, Hinduism holds that there have been numerous such descents in the past and will be more in the future. As Krishna himself says in the Gita:

"Whensoever righteousness declines, O Bharata, and unrighteousness arises, then do I manifest myself upon earth. For the deliverance of the good, for the destruction of evil-doers and for the re-establishment of righteousness, I am born from age to age."[2]

What was in the beginning? Prophet Muhammad said:[3] "God was, and nothing was with him; and he created his imperial throne upon water, and everything was in the tablet of his memory. Christ said:[4] 'With God all things are possible and you shall love the Lord Thy God with all your heart and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength; this is the first commandment." Guru Nanak the great saint of Sikh religion also said that "He is the Lord of everything. Whichever way I look I find

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

His creation, none has won salvation without His grace.

For the common man the mainstay of Hinduism has always been devotion to a deity representing some aspect of incarnation of the divine. Hinduism has a wealth of imagery,[5] symbolism and iconography, and has produced a dazzling array of images and concepts, which often baffles non-Hindus. This has led to the belief that Hinduism is polytheistic. It certainly encourages the worship of many symbols, but it must be understood that behind these myriad forms is the all-pervasive divinity mirrored in a thousand different ways.

Another major focus of devotion in India is the Goddess in her[6] numerous forms. She is worshipped as Parvati, the consort of Shiva; Lakshmi, the consort of Vishnu; Sita and Radha along with Rama and Sri Krishna; Durga with her eighteen arms riding a lion and scattering the demon hordes like chaff; as Kali the fierce, naked goddess standing upon a corpse and drinking the blood of her freshly slain enemies; as Saraswati the goddess of art, poetry and music, the patron of all learning and wisdom.

Hinduism believes in the theory of reincarnation. Moksha, which means "liberation", can be achieved only through the realization of God.

Krishna spoke, 5000 years ago, in the Bhagvad Gita to Arjuna that we are not these material bodies we are actually the 'soul'. The body changes and the soul

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

migrates to a different body. We change our existence as we change our dress. Soul is eternal, imperishable, omnipresent, immovable, constant and everlasting. It is unmanifest, unthinkable and immutable, death is certain for the born and rebirth certain for the dead.

No one wants to die. Most of us seldom think, if ever, about death or what happens afterwards. Some say that death is the end of everything. Some believe in heaven and hell. Still others hold that this life is only one and many we have lived and will live in the future. And more than one third of the world's population—over 1.5 billion people—accept reincarnation as an irrevocable fact of life.

Reincarnation is not a belief system or a psychological device for escaping the grim finality of death but a precise science that explains our past and future lives. Many books have been written on the subject usually based on hypnotic regression near death experiences, accounts of out of body experiences. Details can be seen from the book, 'Coming Back' by Swami Prabhupada of the Bhakti Vedanta Book Trust, Mumbai. Among the ancient Greeks, Socrates, Pythagoras and Plato may be numbered among those who made reincarnation an integral part of their teachings. At the end of his life, Socrates said: "I am confident that truly there is such a thing as living again, and the living spring from the dead."(7) Pythagoras claimed he could remember his past life

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

and Plato presented detailed accounts of his reincarnation in his major works.

Hints of reincarnation are also common in the history of Judaism and early Christianity. There are many passages in the Bible itself indicating that Christ and his followers were aware of the principles of reincarnation.

Among the followers of Islam, the Sufis especially believe that death is no loss, for the immortal soul continually passes through different bodies. Jalalud-Din Rumi, a famous Sufi poet,wrote accordingly.

The timeless Vedic scriptures of India confirm that the soul, according to its identification with material nature, takes one of 8,400,000 forms and once embodied in a certain species of life, evolves automatically from lower to higher forms, ultimately attaining a human body. This body gives us unique opportunity to attain Moksha or Liberation through devotion to God.

In the modern age, European intellectuals began to ponder over the restrictions made by the Church censorship. The great philosopher Voltaire wrote that the doctrine of reincarnation is neither absurd nor useless adding that "It is more surprising to be born more twice than once."(8)

Expressing his firm belief Benjamin Franklin wrote, "Finding myself to exist in this world, I believe that I shall, in some shape or the other, always exist."(9)

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

Goethe, renowned dramatist and scientist as well, once remarked "I am certain that I have been here as I am now a thousand times before, and I hope to return a thousand times."[10] And in Russia, the eminent Count Leo Tolstoy wrote, "As we live through a thousand of dreams in our present life, so is our present life only one of thousands of such lives which we enter from the other, more real life...and then return after death. Our life is one of the dreams of that more real life, and so it is endlessly, until the very last one, the very real life—the life of God."[11] Henry Ford once told a newspaper interviewer, "Genius is experience. Some seem to think that it is a gift or talent, but it is the fruit of long experiences in many lives."[12]

According to the Bible "the wages of sin is death."[13] We see a child dying after a few moments of its birth, obviously without committing any sin. How can it be explained on the basis of the Bible without believing in life or lives before its birth now?

According to Hinduism, previous karma causes a person's birth and determines how long he will live. It also causes pleasure or pain during the lifetime of a person.

A person with a lot of bad karma to work out may be repeatedly born just in order to die again and again in his infancy. He works out his bad karma by going through the painful process of repeated and fruitless births and deaths. The short duration of his life on

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

earth prevents him from making any spiritual progress.

Deeds done by the doer in his past lives: These forces are called Sanchita Karmas or accumulated karmic forces and remain dormant. When they become active and start yielding effects they are called Prarabdha Karma. According to Hinduism, Prarabdha Karma causes a person's birth and how long will he live. It also causes pleasure or pain during the lifetime of a person. When the force of his Prarabdha Karma is exhausted, his body dies. This is the reason why some children die in infancy and have repeated births and deaths. Any action done in this life is called Agami Karma. A person who has committed a heinous crime like murder will suffer from its bad effect in this very life and effects of other actions good or bad go on accumulating. According to Shrimati Sharda Devi, a great saint (1853–1920), "by surrendering to God a devotee can considerably reduce his Prarabdha Karma."[14] Karma according to Buddhist philosophy is but one of the five factors that shape and determine one's fate. Buddhist Compendium of Philosophy says that Karma is the main basic factor that influences one's life. Other four factors seasonal, organic, mental, psychic phenomena are merely accidental phenomena that happen.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

Now What Happens After Death

Here are some extracts from Kathopanishad[15] which give an idea about what happens after our deaths.

Now Nachiketa asks for the third boon from Yama, "Some people think that there is a soul which never dies even after the body perishes, while some others think that this is not so, i.e., there is no soul separate from the body. This is the doubt which I desire to be removed and, being taught by you, I may know the reality, i.e., attain right spiritual knowledge; this is my third boon of the boons of my choosing."

Yama now explains to Nachiketa spiritualism thus: "The Shreya (beatitude) path is different from Preya (worldly affluence) path. They both are different in fruits and take possession of the man's mind. Out of these two one who chooses the Shreya path reaps good fruits, while one who chooses the Preya path (by which he satisfies his cherished worldly desires), degenerates, i.e., falls from the aim of life.

"Those who remain in ignorance (away from right spiritual knowledge), considering themselves as wise and learned, such fools go, stumbling round and round, by the wrong path, like the blind led by the blind."

Now Nachiketa asks Yama: "Tell me that whom you see and who is above sins and virtues, above good and bad deeds, and above present, past and future, i.e., of God who is free from bondages of births and deaths."

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

"Purusha (God) exists even inside our soul which resides inside our heart (no larger than our finger). He is the Lord even of all that existed in the past as well as that which shall exist in future. On realising Him, the man does not shirk from his duty and cannot view with contempt any other creature.

"When all the knots, i.e., crooked and base desires lodging in one's heart, are rent asunder, he attains moksha (immortality). This is the whole teaching of the holy scriptures, i.e., of the Vedas and Shastras.

"There are hundred and one veins connected with the heart of a man, out of which one (called sushumna) leads to the head of a man through which the soul mounts up and attains moksha (immortality), and, while moving out otherwise, the soul takes several births by entering different wombs till he attains salvation, as aforesaid."

On hearing from Yama this spiritual knowledge, Nachiketa realised God is free from all attachment and fear of death. Whosoever else knows such spiritual science shall certainly attain God and Moksha.

Moksha or Liberation From Samsara[16]

The derivative meaning of the Sanskrit word samsara is "the repeated passing of souls through different worlds—gross or subtle." In other words, samsara means going through the cycle of repeated births and deaths. According to Hinduism the goal of human life

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

is to be free or liberated from repeated births and deaths. Such liberation is called moksha or mukti in Sanskrit. Moksha can be attained only through God-realization.

The various schools of Hindu philosophy (darshana) hold differing views about moksha. Some schools say that moksha can be achieved by people only after their death, others claim that it can be achieved even while they are alive. There are also differences of opinion regarding the nature of moksha.

Where is Heaven?[17]

Vedic people were not quite sure about the site or setting of this heaven or who ruled the region. But by common consensus it was situated somewhere up there, and it was Indra who reigned in heaven and Yama who ruled the hell.

How's Heaven Like?

In the mythical tale of Mudgala and Rishi Durvasa, we have a detailed description of the heavens (Sanskrit "swarga"), the nature of its inhabitants, and its advantages and disadvantages. While the two were in a conversation about virtues and heaven, a celestial messenger appears in his heavenly vehicle to take Mudgala to his heavenly abode. In reply to his inquiry, the messenger gives an explicit account of heaven. Here's an excerpt from this scriptural

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

description as paraphrased by Swami Shivananda of Rishikesh:

"...The heaven is well provided with excellent paths...The Siddhas, the Vaiswas, the Gandharvas, the Apsaras, the Yamas and the Dhamas dwell there. There are many celestial gardens. Here sport persons of meritorious acts. Neither hunger nor thirst, nor heat, nor cold, neither grief nor fatigue, neither labour nor repentance, nor fear, nor anything that is disgusting and inauspicious; none of these is to be found in heaven. There is no old age either... Delightful fragrance is found everywhere. The breeze is gentle and pleasant. The inhabitants have resplendent bodies. Delightful sounds captivate both the ear and the mind."

After the bliss of heaven, the celestial messenger tells us about its disadvantages: "In the celestial region, a person, while enjoying the fruits of acts he had already performed, cannot perform any other new act. He must enjoy the fruits of the former life till they are completely exhausted. Further, he is liable to fail after he has completely exhausted his merit. These are the disadvantages of heaven. The consciousness of those about to fall is stupefied. It is also agitated by emotions. As the garlands of those about to fall fade away, fear possesses their hearts..."

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

What is Required Today..."

The above indicates that man's existence in this world is transitory. He should therefore lead a religious life. The purpose of religion is to transform the brute into man the god. Therefore if moral progress does not keep pace with scientific progress, the latter leads to conflicts and scientific knowledge, instead of being employed for increasing happiness, is used for manufacturing deadly weapons.

For evolution of a prosperous, happy and peaceful society what we need is freedom from war—war within the mind and outside the mind—and above all a human heart capable of giving and empowering people.

The Tamil poet Awaiyar beautifully expresses the divine nature of human life, which is God's most precious creation.

"It is rare to be born as a human being
It is still more rare to be born without any deformity
Even if you are born without any deformity
It is rare to acquire knowledge and education
Even if you acquire knowledge and education
It is still rare to offer service to mankind
And contemplate on higher self.
If one leads such a selfless divine life
The gates of heaven open to greet such an evolved soul."(18)

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

Chapter 2

Our Scriptures

The revealed Divine Truths are called the Vedas. Vedas are the bed rock[1] of Indian culture and civilization. They are the earliermost literature known to the human race. The Sanskrit word Veda means knowledge. The teachings of the Vedas are secular. They are equally applicable to all lands and peoples of all times. The Vedas contain eternal spiritual truths and are embodiment of divine knowledge. The Hindu sages considered these truths so sacred that for long time they did not put them in writing. They preserved them in their memory and taught them to deserving students through oral instruction.

The sages had phenomenal memory acquired through the practice of celibacy. As they were learned by hearing and not by reading, the Truths came to be

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

known as *Shruti,*[2] which literally means hearing.

In course of time a need was felt to collect and compile the Vedic Truths. A sage named Krishna Dvaipayana Vyasa[3] collected them from different sources and recorded them in a book called the Vedas. The Vedas had four parts—RigVeda, SamaVeda, YajurVeda and AtharvaVeda. In recognition of his monumental compilation of the Vedas, Krishna Dvaipayana Vyasa was given the name Veda Vyasa.

The Rig (or Rik) Veda, the first of the four Vedas, the oldest religious text, is a collection of hymns for use at the sacrifices (the Yagyas) of the aristocratic Aryan cult. The three later Vedas, viz. the Yajur, Sama and Atharva, are of somewhat different character. The Rig Samhita has 10,589 verses,[4] the Yajur 1,975, the Sama 1,875, and the Atharva 5,977 verses, and thus the total comes to 20,416 verses. The Sama Veda, believed to be the origin of Indian school of music, is in fact a collection of certain sacrificial formulae in prose and verse to be pronounced by the "Adhvaryu"[5] or priest who performs the manual part of the sacrifice. It exists in various recensions ('Samhitas') which are of two types: the 'Black'—giving the formulae with rubricated instructions—and the 'White', adding detailed instructions in a lengthy appendix called a 'Brahmana'. The Atharva Veda consists mainly of magic spells and the Mantras (incantations) in verse, which was certainly compiled

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

after the Rig and Yajur Vedas. The massive Brahmanas, which were looked down upon as appendices to the Vedas and the mystical Aranyakas and the Upanishads, are in turn appendices to the Brahmanas. This complete set of literature is called Vedic literature.

The most important message of the Vedas is that everything and every being is divine. There are four very important statements in the Vedas. They are called Mahavakyas or "great sentences".[6] Three out of these four great sentences speak of the divinity of every soul, the fourth speaks of the nature of God.

- Aham Brahmasmi—I am Brahman (God)
- Tat tvam asi—You are that (Brahman)
- Ayam atma Brahma—This indwelling Self is Brahman
- Prajnanam Brahma—Supreme knowledge is Brahman

God is equally present everywhere, but not equally manifest. His manifestation is greatest in Divine Incarnations and spiritually illumined souls, and least in a non-living object, such as a rock. Vedic literature asserts the inherently divine nature of man and provides means and methods to manifest this divinity.

According to the estimate of many scholars, the Vedic texts must be at least 4000 years old.

The four Vedas—the Rig, the Sama, the Yajur and

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

the Atharva-contain between them over a hundred thousand verses, which include some of the greatest mystical poetry ever written. The Vedas contain beautiful hymns[7] addressed to various powers of Nature such as the Sun, the Moon, the Ocean, the Rain, the Dawn, all pervaded by a deep intuitive awareness of the essential unity and interconnectedness behind these phenomena. Portions deal with the ritual worship of the early Aryans, the Yajna sacrifice revolving around the sacred fire which was looked upon as the intermediary between the human and the divine powers. There is also a fascinating array of medical prescriptions, specially in the AtharvaVeda, and a great deal of other social material including hymns, to matrimony and friendship, prayers for progeny, longevity, security, cattle and prosperity. Taken together, they constitute a unique document of the religious consciousness of all humanity dealing with every aspect of life and culture, etc.

These Vedas are our prime source of knowledge.[8] It is not surprising that eons before the arrival of Copernicus, Galileo etc. the Vedic seers knew that the moon is devoid of its own light and reflects only the solar light. They knew much before the west learnt about the basics of surgery as to how and why a part of human body should be amputated and what is the technique of setting a displaced bone.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

Besides the physical or metaphysical concepts or knowledge, the Vedas are also the sources that moulded our psyche–nay the oriental man's psyche—and hammered in some of the beliefs as much as to make them our axioms—like the transmigration of the soul, the karma theory and the need to live together with consideration for each other. The Sooktas or the Richas of the Vedas teach us that no matter what man achieves he cannot neglect God. (1) Brahman,[9] the unchanging, undying reality that pervades the entire cosmos. The Vedic seers saw that everything in the universe changes, and they called the creation samsara, that which always moves. (2) That, as the changing universe outside was pervaded by the Brahman, the changing world within man himself was based upon the undying Atman. (3) That the Atman and Brahman were essentially one. (4) That the supreme goal of life lies in spiritual realization whereby the individual becomes aware of the deathless Atman within him. (5) That of karma, a concept that includes action, causality and destiny. Action being inevitable, the human individual is bound by the results of his actions, pleasant fruits flowing from good deeds and unpleasant consequences from evil ones.

After all what the Vedas[10] contain that drew the western scholars such as Max Muller and Winternitz like iron filings to magnet? Why doing a 'homa' is still necessary? Why must chanting of the sacred syllable

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

'OM' or the Gayatri Mantra be necessary even for a modern youth? Why the disciplines of Yoga and our indigenous school of medicine 'Ayurveda' are gaining popularity all over the world? Needless to emphasise that these two unique schools that strive to unite mind and matter, the subjective and objective in an unparalleled way, trace their origin to the Vedas only.

The Vedas' eternal message of 'Tat twam asi' is the basic concept that developed into our belief of universal brotherhood, the very premise of modern India's foreign policy. Our other belief 'Sarva dharma samabhava' or showing equal respect to all faiths also had its seed in the Veda teachings.

QUINTESSENCE OF THE VEDAS

Introduction

The Vedas are an encyclopaedia dealing with every aspect of life and culture, religion, mysticism, sciences, metaphysics, cosmogony, sociology etc. The light which they emanate still enlightens us. All the mantras of the Vedas are not abstruse and difficult to understand. Some of them are so simple and easy that we can understand their meanings and significance without much difficulty. Nonetheless the students of Vedas should keep in mind the following words of Max Muller:[11]

"But with the exception of these simple petitions

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

the whole world of Vedic ideas is so entirely beyond our intellectual horizon, that instead of translating we can, as yet, only guess and combine" (The Vedas by Max Muller, p. 8).

(1) PEACE PRAYER: Oh Lord, bestower of all auspicious things, You are ' Mitra' the Friend of all in every respect. Vouchsafe us the true happiness in this world. Oh Most Excellent, Worth-attaining, supreme Master, You are 'Varuna', the Elect. The Highest and the Best of all. Impart the highest bliss to us all in this very birth. Oh Impartial, Righteous Dispenser of Justice, You are 'Aryyamaa', the Controller of all. Grant us, therefore, Oh Lord, without further delay the just benefit due to us. Oh Master of all power and plenty, You are 'Indra' the Mighty Lord. Bestow soon upon us, Oh Lord, the lasting happiness and make us Master of the greatest power and possessions. Oh Omnipotent God you are 'Vishnu', All-pervading and 'Urukrama', the Lord of infinite prowess. Grant, oh Master, the endless happiness to us.[12]

(2) GOD, HIS NATURE AND ATTRIBUTES

a) He (God) is All-pervading, All-powerful, Bodiless, Faultless, without sinews, Holy, and untouched by sin. He is Omniscient, Wise, Poet, Self-existent and All encompassing (Y. 40:2).[13]

b) Whatever, animate and inanimate, there is

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

in this world, is pervaded by God (Yajur Veda, 40-1).

c) God, whose name and glory is great, has no image (Yaju 32:3).

d) He (God) is our Father and Brother. He is the controller of the Universe. He knows all the worlds and objects, in Him the emancipated souls move freely in the region free from worldly pleasures and pains (Y. 32:30).

e) God is the cause of all the movements in this world; but He Himself remains unmoved. He is far away from the ignorant; but near at hand for the enlightened. He is within and without all the beings of this world (Yaju 40:5).

f) O' Lord, Thou are to us as a father is to his son. May we attain thee. May you shower happiness on us (R. 1:1:9).[14]

g) Thou are God of gods, a wonderful friend, life of all lives, and glorious in this cosmic sacrifice. O' Lord! May we live peacefully under thine extensive protection and may we never come to grief under thine friendship (R. 1:94:13).

h) O' Refuge of all, You are our Father and You are our Mother. You are Lord of innumerable activities. We pray to you for your good wishes (R. 8:98:11).

i) O' men! Know Him as God (Indra) who

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

stabilizes the moving earth, who checks the eruption of volcanic mountains, who creates the vast space and who supports the heavens (A. 20:34:2).[15]

j) Singers sing your praise, worshippers and persons versed in Vedas worship you. O' Lord of numerous activities! The learned accept you as the Most Exalted (Rig, 1:10:1).

k) All the deities find refuge in the All-Powerful God (Atharva Veda, 13:4(1) 13:3).

l) He (God) is dispenser of justice. He is most exalted; He is punisher of evil acts and is God of gods (A. 13:4(1) 4).

(3) CREATION

1. Who knows truly and who can tell us surely from what and how this universe was created. The wise (who are expected to know this great secret) were born after the universe had been created. Who, therefore, can know from what it was created (R. 10:124:6).
2. Then there was neither being nor non-being. The atmosphere was not, nor sky above it. What covered all? And where? By what protected? Was there the fathomless abyss of water? Then neither death nor deathless existed. Of day and night there was yet no distinction. Alone That One breathed calmly

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

self-supported, other than it was none, nor ought above it. Darkness there was at first in darkness hidden. The universe was undistinguished water. That which was void and emptiness lay hidden. Alone by power of favour it was developed (R. 10:129-1,2,3).

3. By the great illuminative fervour of the Lord eternal Law (Rita) and atoms (disintegrated Prakriti) were evolved. On account of the permeations of the atoms darkness prevailed everywhere, after which, in due course, the watery atmospheric ocean came into existence. This ocean gave birth to primal Nebula (Samvatsar) the edge of which was made bright and inner part dark by the controler of the universe. Thereafter, the upholder of the world created the sun, the moon, the earth, the heavens and the mid-regions (out of the Nebula) as He did in the previous cycle (R. 10:190-1,2,3).
4. The great giver God, created corn and other articles of food. He also created birds, and beasts which dwell in forests and villages. (R. 10:90:8).

(4) REVELATION OF VEDAS

Rig, Yaju, Sama and Atharva emanated from the most Adorable God (Rig, 10:90:9).

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

(5) SERMONS OF THE VEDAS

1. May the son be obedient to his father and of one mind with his mother. May the wife speak sweet and gentle words to her husband (A. 3:30:2).
2. O' Men! Earn wealth by hundred means but give it in charity to needy persons by thousand hands. (A. 3:24:5)
3. One who eats or enjoys alone accumulates sin (R. 10:117:6).
4. O' Men! Move together, speak together (alike) and think alike (R. 10:191:2).
5. He who is well-versed in the Vedas is guest. One should not take his meal before the guest has partaken it (A. 29:6(3)-7).
6. Do not harm the living beings of the earth and the sky. Do not injure the vegetable things even (Yaj.11:45).
7. Do not become angry like a serpent or devor like a python (Y. 6:12).
8. Do not covet the wealth of any one else (Y. 40:1).
9. Aspire to live for hundred years by doing acts disinterestedly without longing for their fruits (Y. 40:2).
10. O' men, master of actions! Remember OM. Remember your acts done for the attainment of your goal (Y. 40:15).

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

11. Your mind should not indulge in evil deeds. Your mind should not go astray. Do not hesitate in doing good to living beings (A. 8:1:7).
12. Do not weap for those who die and go to other regions or incarnations (A. 8:1:8).
13. Wife and husband should live together happily in their house in the company of sons, grandsons and relatives and enjoy full life. They should never separate from each other (R. 10:85:42).
14. Banish from your mind eagle's pride, vulture's greed, sparrow's lust, dog's jealousy, owl's foolishness and wolf's anger (R. 7:104:22).
15. A man can easily distinguish truth from falsehood because they are contradictory. Truth follows the law and wise men protect it and destroy what is false (R. 7:104:12).
16. O'God! If any one is inimical to us, or if we are (justly) inimical to anyone, we leave him to your judgement (A. 3:27:1:6).
17. The Vedas have been revealed for the benefit of all people Brahmans, wariors, traders,. labourers; those who are our relatives and those who are not related to us (A. 16:2).
18. God's effulgence can be compared to that of the sun. Sky is the great reservoir of water like the

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

ocean. Sun is older than the earth. There is no limit to the rays of the sun (Y. 23:48).

19. Association of the wise leads to happiness. (Y. 8:4)

(6) SOUL-ITS NATURE AND ATTRIBUTES

1. The One (Soul) is subtler than hair and the other (Prakriti) is invisible; but the divinity which pervades it (Prakriti) is dear to me (soul) (A. 10:8:25).
2. These ancient souls become new again and assume different new forms like day and night (A. 10:8:2).
3. These ancient Souls, hundreds, thousands, ten thousand, ten crores and innumerable- are pervaded by the Lord. When they attain Him, then they become glorified (A. 10:8:4).
4. Bound by his actions the immortal soul attains low and high incarnations (bodies). The immortal soul dwells in the perishable physical bodies. (R. 1:164:18)
5. The immortal soul dwells in the mortal body on account of the fruit of his actions. It becomes one with the body while dwelling in it. (R. 1:164:30)
6. O'God! You are giver of life. May you grant us again and again life, eyes and other

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

organs for enjoyment on this planet. May we see the rising sun for long. Kindly bestow happiness on us. (R. 10:51:6)

7. Those persons who slay their conscious by doing evil deeds go, after death, to those incarnations and regions which are enveloped in darkness and inactivity. (Yaj.40:3)
8. The soul of the child remains in pleasant slumber for ten months in the womb of the mother. (R. 5:78:9)
9. My mind is ever young and possesses great power and is sealed in the heart. (Y. 34:6)
10. The mind travels long distances in the wakeful state and similarly roams about far and wide in dreams. (Yaj. 34:1)
11. The past, the present and the future can be comprehended through the mind. (Yaj. 34:4)
12. For leading a good life you should recall your mind which roams about in past and future events. (R. 10:58:2)
13. May my mind entertain beneficial thoughts. (Y. 34)

(7) VEDIC WISDOM AND WORLD PEACE

Vedic monotheism suggests only one God, one Universe and one World as one family (Atharva 2/1/

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

1). Vasudhaiv Kutumbhakam-all humanity is an extended family. The highest good is to be found not in domination of one race or religion, or nationality over another, but in a co-oprative common wealth in which the welfare of all being is ensured. *Bahujana Sukhaya bahujana hitaya ca*. Gradually the idea of World Citizenship has been gaining ground. It is being increasingly realised that earth belongs to all human beings, and therefore, the humanity needs a world order which makes every human being a World or Earth Citizen. Security of mankind needs a common rule of law, a collective security and global equality aimed at proper global production and equal distribution. This sort of thinking might look very radical for the modern man, but Vedas have been advocating the concept of one world, and global equality, or globalisation right from eternity.

(8) SCIENTIFIC, ASTRONOMICAL AND MEDICAL DESCRIPTIONS[31]

In Atharva Vedas, Jamini Brahmana, Shatapatha Brahmana and Attareya Brahmana and Rig Vedas, there are explicit references to the Solar systems, galaxies of stars, Meteors, heatwaves, called Vayansi ,the smoke in space,the Marichi group of cosmic rays,the Marut group of cosmic rays, electromagnetic fields created by these Maruts, the magnetic field of the boundaries in space. Shatapatha Brahmana

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

further holds that the gods converted these boundaries into ellipses so as to stabilize the sun and the earth etc. scientifically speaking, this stability is due to the electromagnetic field that these boundaries generate. There are seven principal rays of the sun which are the most excellent of the 1000 rays of the sun. The earth is round. In the yajurveda, (III, 6) it is mentioned that "the earth revolves in space, it revolves with its mother water, in its orbit, It moves round its father, the sun". (32)

(9) VEDAS AND MATHEMATICS(34)

1339. Zero is infinite.

OM KHAM BRAHMA. YV.40.17

Trans- The Supreme Being (Brahman) is kha (Zero, infinite).

1342. Duration of one creation (Yuga).

SATAM TE AYUTAM HAYANAN, DVE YUGE TRĪNI CATVĀRI KRNMAH. AV.8.2.21

Trans- Duration of one creation (that is from beginning to the end) is 4,32,00,00,000 years (that is 432 million years).

Ayuta*Sata=10000*100=1000,000,add 432 in the beginning that is 432,00,00,000 (N.B. Figures are written from right to left. Hence 2,3,4, become 432).

1343. Fraction is used.

TRIPĀD URDHVA UD-AIT PURUSAH, PĀDO-

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

ASYEHA-ABHAVAT PUNAH. YV.31.4

Trans- The Supreme Being is 3/4 beyond the universe and 1/4 is here in the world.

1344. Fractions.

KALAYA TE KRINANI, kUSTHAYA, SAPHENA, PADA. Mait. S. 3. 7.7

Trans-Some fractions are used, namely Kala=1/16, Kustha=1/12, Sapha=1/8, Pada=1/4.

1346. Cricumference, Diameter and Triangle.

BHINDA VALASYA PARIDHĪN IV A TRITAH RV.1.52.5

Trans- An external triangle crosses the circumference of circle. The ration of circumference (Paridhi) to diameter (Vyasa) of a circle is approximately 3:1 (exact 22/7). Such ratio is called Trita (denoted by pai)(

(10) Vedas and Environment(35)

1350. Circumference and nucleus.

ANTARDHIR DEVĀNĀM, PARIDHIR MANUSYANAM AV. 14.2.44

Trans- There is a circumference of a circle (Paridhi) in every world for the human beings and there is a nucleus (Antardhi) which is the source of energy to the universe.

1351. Purity of atmosphere checks pollution.

SARVO VAI TATRA JIV ATI GAUR-ASVAH

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

PURUSAH PASUH.YATREDAM BRAHMA KRIYATE PARIDHIR JIVANAYA KAM. AV.8.2.25

Trans- Everyone, whether a human- being or an animal, lives safely, where the purity of atmosphere (Brahman) is maintained all-around for the purpose of life.

1352. The green-house effect.

BHUMIṢ-TVA PATU HARITENA VISV ABHRD, AṄGNIH PIPARTU-AYAṢA SAJOSAH.VIRṮDBHIS-TE ARJUNAM SAMVIDANAM, DAKSAM DADATU SUMANASAMĀNAM. AV. 5.28.5

Trans- The earth provides surface for vegetation for Green House effect. The fire provides iron. The herbs and plants, having union with the sun-rays, provided congenial atmosphere for the creation.

11. THE GALAXIES THROUGH the largest (200-inch) reflecting telescope on Mount Palomar in California we can look at space up to 2,00,0 0,00,00,000 (11 zeroes) light years away. This space is almost uniformly populated with about 26, 00,00,000 galaxies These galaxies are about 20,00,00,000 light years away from us. Each galaxy is made up of at least 10,00,00,00,000 stars.

Vedic Calculations Regarding the number of these galaxies which adorn the firmament, we have a calculation in the Shatapatha Brahmana in X, 4, 4.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

According to this, the number of stars in our galaxy approximates 1, 08,00,000.

The Periodicity of the Cosmic Rays we have a reference to this periodicity in Atharvaveda XIX, 7 which refers to the 27 nakshatras as a luni-solar concept of time. Each nakshatra evinces the relation between the rotations of the sun and the moon. The time taken by the sun to complete one revolution round the zodiac is 365.25 days. The moon completes one revolution round the zodiac in 27.32 days.

Time of sun /Time of moon 365.25 /27.32=13°20'

So while the sun completes one revolution, the moon completes, 13 1/3 revolutions approximately. Based on an arc of 13°20', the whole zodiac is divided into 27 divisions which are called nakshatras. Of the four types of months referred to in Hindu astronomy, there is one type known as the nakshatra-month. This has a duration of 27 days and the cosmic particles revolve in space with this 27-day periodicity.

Atharvaveda XIX, 8, 1, refers to these nakshatras.

The Twelve Signs in Astrology :-

Whatever be the nature and background of planetary symbology, Astrology, the science of stars, derived from the Greek root, Astron, meaning 'a star,' hinges round the twelve signs of the zodiac, which the Atharvaveda refers to in the following mantra:

"One is the wheel, the tyres are twelve in number,

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

the naves are three. What man has understood it? Three hundred spokes have thereupon been hammered and sixty pins set firmly in their places."(Atharva vedaX,8,4)

These twelve signs have been thus named and symbolised:

Aries (Mar 20- Apr 18)	..... Ram	..... Mash
Taurus (Apr 19- May 19)	..... Bull	..... Vrishib
Gemini (May 20- Jun 20)	..... Twins	..... Mithun
Cancer (Jun21- July21)	..... Crab	..... Karak
Leo (Jul 22- Aug 21)	..... Lion	..... Singh
Virgo (Aug22- Sep21)	..... Virgin	..... Kanya
Libra (Sep 22-Oct 22)	..... Balance	..... Tula
Scorpio (Oct 23- Nov 20)	..... Scorpion	.... Varishchik
Sagittarius (Nov 21- Dec 20)	..... Archer	..... Dhanu
Capricorn(Dec 21- Jan 19)	..... Goat	..... Makkar
Aquarius(Jan 20- Feb 18)	.....Waterman	..... Kumbh
Pisces(Feb19-Mar 19)	..... Fishes	..... Meen

The zodiac is comparable to a board in which the nakshatras form the strings; sun, the regulator, gives, it vitality and sustenance, and moon which harps on the strings of the zodiac while passing along the 28 nakshatras, produces vibratory currents in creation, which affect humanity at large. References to the moon's phases may be seen in Rigveda (X, 85, 19) and Yajurveda (X VIII, 40).

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

Atharvaveda is a monument of Indian system of medicine. Based on these writings in the Vedas, government of India is giving priority to Indigenous system of medicine. For further details regarding the origin, history, theory of Indian medicines, the Vedic chemistry of Gems, scope of chemistry in the Vedas, etc. one may refer to the beautiful book " The Holy Vedas " by Pandit Satyakam Vidyalankar published by Clarion Books G.T. Road Shahdara, Delhi-110032.

QUINTESSENCE OF MANU-SMRITI

(Manu-Smrti was composed at the time of Creation-Dayanand SP 259)[16]

1. The time taken in the winking of eye is Nimesh, 18 Nimesh make one Kastha, 30 Kastha make one Kala 30 Kala make one Mahurat and 30 Mahurat make a day and night.(Manusmriti 1:64)
2. God's day (Kalpa) and God's night (Dissolution) each comprise thousand divine years that is 12000000*360:432 crore years. (Manusmriti 1:71:72)
3. A Manvantara comprises 3067220000 year.

Note: (Manu 1-79)

a) There are 14 Manvantaras in Kalp.

b) Kalpa: 14 Manvataras+Six chaturyagis of time taken in the creation of the worlds.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

Each day of Brahma consists of four billion, three hundred and twenty million years and the night of the Brahma is of similar duration.

4. The names of the first seven manvantaras are as under: Swaymbhav, Swarochish, Uttam, Tams, Raivat, Chakshush and Vaivasvat. (Manu. 1:62)
5. There are innumerable creations and dissolutions: and God enacts this play again and again. (Manu, 1:10)
6. The duration of the four Yugas is an under:-

Satya	4800*360: 1728000 years.
Treata	3600*360:1296000 years.
Dvapar	2400*360:864000 years.
Kali	1200*360:432000 years. (MANU. 1:69:30)

The world is passeing through Kali Yuga which is about 5095 years old.

7. Observing his vow of celibacy the student, after completing his study of Vedas, should enter into married life. (Manusmriti 2:175)
8. When the householder finds that his body has grown wrinkles, hair have become grey and his son has got a son then he should enter Vanprastha Ashram. (Manu 6:2)
9. He, whom no body fears, who has become a Sanyasi (ascetic) after renouncing his home, attains bliss. (Manu.6:39)

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

10. These four ashrams, Brahmacharya, Grihastha, Vanprastha & Sanyas-are dependent upon and emanates from the Grishstha Ashram. (Manu. 6:87)
11. For the proper maintenance and protection of the society God allotted separate duties to Brahmans, Kahatriyas, Vaishas and Sudras. Reading and teaching, performance of Yagyas, giving and accepting charity are the duties of Brahmans. Pretection of people, charity, Yagyas, Study and non-indulgence in objects of sense are the duties of Kshatriyas.

    Protection of cattle, charity, Yagyas, Study, trade, agriculture and cultivation are the duties of Vaishyas.

    God has allotted to the Shudras (illiterate persons) the duties of serving the other three Varnas. (Manu, 1:88:89,90,91)
12. Whatever conduct is ordained in the Vedas and Shastras is the highest dharma. (Manusmriti 1:109)
13. The following are the ten attributes of Dharma: steadfastness, forgiveness, control of the mind, non-stealing, purity, control of the sense-organs, true knowledge of self (atma), truthfulness and absence of anger.
14. The fruits of good or bad acts done by the mind are borne by the mind; similarly the fruits of good

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

or bad acts done by the tongue or this body are borne by tongue and the body respectively.

15. Virtuous (Sattvic) persons attain godhood, the passionate (Rajsic) persons become common men and the vicious (Tamsic) person go to lower incarnations.
16. Those who do evil deeds have necessarily to be born again to bear the fruits of their evil deeds. (Manu. 12:16)
17. Body is purified by water, mind by truth, Atma (soul) by knowledge and penance and intellect by wisdom. (manusmriti. 5:109)
18. For sins committed by the body the soul acquires the species of Vegetation, for sins committed by the tongue the species of birds and beasts and the body of chandala for sins committed by the mind. (Manusmriti 12:2)

Path of duty

May we ever unswervingly follow the path of duty as do the sun and the moon!

May we always serve humanity without demanding the price of our service!

May we ever be benevolent, kind, self sacrificing, detached and adjustable.

May we surrender all and serve humanity like the sun and the moon. (Rig. 5.51.15)

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

Calm Confidence

The Lord of Bounteousness hath given ample riches to us, still we feel our soul is hollow, and crave for more;

God hath given supreme strength, still we feel weak and emaciated.

Let the stream of God's love flow in our soul, in our veins, freely to enable us to face the adversities of life with calm confidence.

QUINTESSENCE OF THE UPANISADS

"In the whole world there is no study so beneficial and so elevating as that of the Oopanikhat (Upanisads). It has been the solace of my life, it will be the solace of my death." SCHOPENHUER

The Upanisads deal with the higher knowledge, which is suprarational knowledge. The Upanishads are known as the Vedanta, or the end of the Vedas. One hundred and eight Upanishads have been preserved, of which at least fourteen are of major importance. The most popular are: [18]Isha, Kena, Katha, Mundaka, Mandukya, Aitareya, Taittiriya, Chhandogya, Prashna, Shvetashvatara and Brihadaranyaka. [19]These remarkable dialogues between the teacher and one or more pupils deal with the deepest problems of human existence, of death and other realms of being, of the goal of life and the stages of spiritual realization. The Isa(19) Upanishad, though containing only eighteen verses, is considered

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

to be probably the most important such test. Its famous first line, 'This entire cosmos, whatever is still or moving, is pervaded by the divine', contains the very essence of Hinduism.

The Mundaka Upanishad (2.2.3) has a beautiful verse which brings out the essential role of the Upanishads as vehicles of spiritual realization:

The Katha Upanisad contains the memorable dialogue between the boy Naciketas and Yama, the God of Death, and represents a remarkable formulation of the Vedantic gospel.

The cardinal concepts of the Upanisads can perhaps be expressed in a brief compass as being five. The first and most basic concept is the concept of the all-pervasive Brahman. But the Upanisadic view is that in the ultimate analysis all that exists is manifestation of the divine. Indeed, there can be no manifestation without divinity behind it, and this, in a way, is the realization of the new science. Previously, in the classical science of Newton, there was the dichotomy between matter and spirit, matter and energy; but in the post-Einsteinian situation you find now a realization that whatever exists is really the same energy. It may appear as matter, it may this appear as energy; it may appear as a particle or as a wave, it is essentially the same energy. So the unified-force theory towards which the scientists are desperately probing has its spiritual counterpart in the concept of

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

the all-pervasive Brahman of the Upanisads.

The second is that Brahman resides within each individual consciousness, in the Atman. It is a reflection of that Brahman, it is a part of it. One of the examples given in the Upanisads is that as, when a great fire is lighted, millions of sparks fly up out of the fire and then fall back into it so from the Brahman arise all these millions of galaxies and into Brahman again they all ultimately disappear. The concept of isvarah sarvabhutanam harddese rjuna tisthati, of the Lord residing within the heart of each individual, is the second great insight of the Upanisads, and the relationship between the Atman and the Brahman is the keynote upon which the whole of Vedantic teaching revolves. All the four yogas are directed towards bringing about the union between the Atman and the Brahman. There are in our tradition four major paths of yoga-jnana-yoga, the way of wisdom, Bhakti-yoga, the way of emotional rapport; Karma-yoga, the way of dedicated action, and Raja-yoga, the

Way of psychic discipline All of them are directed towards bringing about the union between the all-pervasive Brahman without and the immortal Atman within.

Flowing from this, we come now to another important Vedantic concept, that all human beings because of their shared spirituality are members of a single, extended family. That is the basis of the

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

concept of human beings as an extended family:vasudhaiva kutumbakam

The fourth major philosophical concept of the Upanisads, the essential unity of all religions, of all spiritual paths-ekam sad viprah bahudha vadanti (truth is one, the wise call it by many names)- as the Rg-Veda has it. The Mundaka has a beautiful mantra which says that as streams and[20] rivulets arise in different parts of the world but ultimately flow into the same ocean, so do all these creeds and castes and religious formulations arise in different times and areas, but, if they have a true aspiration, ultimately reach the same goal.

Here is a philosophy which cuts across barriers of hatred and fanaticism that have been built in the name of religion. The Vedanta is a universal religion; it accepts the infinite possibilities of movements towards the divine, it does not seek to limit or confine us to any particular formulation.

A fifth Vedantic concept is the concept of the welfare of all beings: Bahujana sukhaya hitaya ca. The Vedanta does not seek to throw one class against another class, one caste against another caste, or one group against another group. The Vedanta seeks the welfare of all creation, not only of human beings but also of what we call the lower creatures. Vedanta constantly exhorts that, while we are working for our own salvation, we must also shun the path of violence,

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

shun the path of hatred, try and develop both elements of inner and outer work:In brief the Upanishads teach us as follows:_

(1) GOD

1. Whatever exists in this moving world is pervaded by God. (Ish.1) [21]
2. He is all-pervading, All-powerful, Bodiless, Faultless, without sinews, Holy and un-touched by sin. He is Omniscient, wise, poet, Self-existent and All-encompassing. (Ish.8)
3. Wealth is temporary. God is eternal. Eternal cannot be realised by means of temporary objects.
4. He pervades in all existences, but remains unmanifested. Only seers can see Him with subtle intellects. (Kath. 1:3:12)[22]
5. The path of God realisation is sharp as a razor's edge and difficult to traverse. (Kath. 1:3:14)
6. He is Dlvine, Formless, Unborn, Luminous, without Breath and Mind. (Mundak 2:1:2)[23]
7. Past, present and future are all in OM (god). (Mand.1)
8. OM is Eternal, OM is all this universe. (Tait.1:8)[24]
9. The beauty of God is like a brilliant yellow

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

coloured role like the flame of fire, like the white lotus and like the flashes of lightening. (Brihas 2:3:6)[25]

10. God is known by three names-OM, Kham-Braham. (Br.5:1:1)
11. There is nothing greater or subtler than Him. (Svet, 3:9)[26]
12. He is the Creator of the world; He is All-knowledge; All-wise; Self born and the Protector of the creatures. (Svet. 6:10)
13. Prakriti is Maya and God is the Master of Maya. (Svet. 4:9/10)

(2) SOUL

1. The soul is never born nor does it ever die, it is conscious. It is birthless, eternal and ancient. It does not die on the death of the body. (Kath.1:2:18)
2. The objects of senses are higher than the senses, the mind is higher than the senses, the intellect is higher than the mind and soul is higher than the intellect. Kath. 1:3:10)
3. God soul are like two beautiful birds which cling to a tree as friends. One of them, the soul, eats the sweet fruits of the tree while the other (God) without eating the fruits watches His friend. (Mundak 3:1:1)
4. The soul can be comprehended by means of truth,

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

self-discipline, right knowledge and pure life.

5. The soul is stationed in the heart. (Chh. 8:3:3)[27]
6. The soul acquires different forms and bodies according to his actions. (Svet. 5:12)

3) ACTION AND THEIR FRUITS

1. Doing good deeds, aspire to live for hundred years. (Ish.2)
2. Those who tarnish their souls by doing evil deeds go, after death, to incarnations, which are enveloped in darkness and inertia (like trees). (Ish.2)
3. Persons who have done evil deeds are born after their death as dog, pig, chandal etc. (Chh. 5:90:7)
4. As are the actions so are the fruits. (Br. 4:4:5)

(4) TWO PATHS-GOOD AND PLEASANT

1. People who live in ignorance, but consider themselves as wise, wander about and stumble like blind men led by the blind. (Mundak 1:2:8)
2. Truth conquers and not falsehood. The path of God Realisation can be traversed by truthfulness. (Mundak 3:1:6)

(5) GOD-REALIZATION

1. God is the target. OM is the bow and soul is the arrow. The target must be pierced with an

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

unfailing aim. As the arrow is lost in the target, so the soul must be absorbed in Him. (Mundak 2:9:4)

2. When all the desires of a mortal are destroyed then he becomes immortal: he is merged in Brahma (God) even while dwelling in the body. (Br.4:4:7)[28]

3. In the path of God-realisation one sees different lights-white, blue, green etc. (Br. 4:4:9)

4. The path of God-realization is difficult to tread. It is as sharp as razor blade. (Kath. 3:14)

(6) DREAMS

1. In dreams the mind revels in the glory of his imaginations. He sees what he had seen, hears what he had heard, feels what he had felt and thinks what he had thought before in many lands and regions. He also sees, hears, feels and thinks what he had not seen, heard, felt or known before (Prashna 4:8)[29]

2. Whatever the soul sees in dreams are reflections of what he has seen or heard in the waking state. (Br. 4:3:12)

(7) SERMONS

1. Remember OM (God) as also the deeds done. (Ish. 17)

2. Do not covet the wealth of other. (Ish.1)

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

3. Speak the truth: do your duty: do not neglect studies: do not neglect truth: do not neglect doing good deeds: Respect your father and teacher as God: and mother as Goddess: Do beautiful acts with diligence. Do whatever good and righteous deeds are done by the teachers. (Tait. 11:2)
4. Do not speak ill of food. (Tait. 3:10)
5. Do not ignore or neglect the guest who has come to stay with you. (Tait. 3:10)
6. The knowledge contained in the scriptures is only minimal. It does not instill peace of 7mind. (Chh. 7:1:3)
7. Look upon all the living beings as your friends(30)
8. Stability of the family depends upon mutual love.(30)

(8) DEATH

1. At the time of death all the senses merge in the soul and then the soul does not see, hear, think, touch or know anything. A t that time the soul departs from the body through the eyes, head or any other aperture of the body. When it departs, the pranas (vital breath) and other senses also leave the body. The soul is conscious at the time of departure from the body. Knowledge, actions and intelligence accompany the soul after death. (Br. 4:4:2)

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

(9) REBIRTH

1. Some souls are re-born as living beings, and other as plants and trees (immovable incarnations) according to their deeds and knowledge. (Kath. 2:2:7)
2. After death the soul acquires new incarnations. (Br. 4:3:36)
3. Evil doers are born after death as dog, pig and chandal. (Chh. 5:10:7)

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

Chapter 3

Bhagavatam—A Quintessence

The Srimad Bhagavatam is one of the greatest books of bhakti in our tradition. Immensely popular all over India, it has inspired poets, saints, and artists, as it provides a great range of material for their art. Bhagavatam means, that which deals with Bhagavan the blessed Supreme Being. It has twelve skandhas, or books, with eighteen thousand verses in all. The essence of the Bhagavatam can be summed up as contained in the two talks given by swami Ranganathanandaji, of Ramakrishna Mission, at New Delhi in 1990[1] and in Calcutta in April 1997. In it the author brings out the real spirit of the Srimad Bhagavatam. This wonderful Bhakti-scripture suggests, the revered Swamji shows that this world has a divine quality and therefore God is to be worshipped not only in temples and images, but also

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

in the hearts of all. Unfortunately we have neglected the human situation and, as a result have suffered for centuries The Bhagavatam teaches the fundamental Vedantic truth that we are all one. It also exhorts devotees to love God for love's sake, and tells us that life on earth is superior to life in heaven. Hence Sri Krishna's avatara, the Swami Explains, represents the glory of the human being.

Philosophy[2] of the Bhagavata

1. The Bhagavata is a gospel of divine life and love, and not a treatise of philosophy. It is based upon vijnana, the direct experience of the Reality but includes jnana (rational philosophy built on it) also.

   According to it, Brahman or Atman is the only absolute Reality. The whole universe is only an expression in name and form of this Reality.

2. The work describes Brahman as an impersonal super-person, the creator, sustainer and final refuge of the world of matter and mind. He is present in every atom of the universe in all his glory, maya is the infinite power he wields. He takes whatever form his devotees desire to worship him in, continuing to remain formless too.

3. Then comes the concept of 'avatara,' God come down (avatara= coming down) as a living being,

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

in order to help mankind to rise to divine levels by restoring the spiritual equilibrium. The Bhagavata refers to several avataras, there being no uniformity in the number or sequence, which varies from ten to forty.

4. The most important aspect of the teachings of the Bhagavata is the mode of sadhana it prescribes for attaining perfection. Bhakti, love or devotion, has been given the pride of place, though jnana (*knowledge), yoga (contemplation) and karma (right activities) too find an important place in its scheme. Bhakti has been advocated as a more natural and hence an easier path to perfection.

5. The highest goal of life is called mukti. It is a state of freedom from all bondage and getting back one's natural state of divinity or bliss. Bhakti and japa (repetition of God's name) are the most efficacious means of purifying the mind leading ultimately to mukti.

6. Following the usual traditions of the puranas, the Bhagavata also deals with many concepts involving immense time-periods and almost boundless regions of space in its narrations about creation.

7. The Bhagavata is also a work of exceptional literary merit.

Traditional commentaries[3] : For this very

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

reason, the Bhagavata has attracted the attention of several scholars who have composed commentaries on it. As many as 44 comentaries are known to exist.

By far, the bhāvarthadipīka of Sridhara svamin (14th cent.) seems to be the most popular of these commentaries. The Bhagavata-condrika of Viraraghavacharya-tirtha are other commentaries,

8. The Bhagavata is essentially a devotional text. Much of the metaphysics found in it is theological in nature, supporting the devotional doctrines. The metaphysics, however, is that of Vedanta. Hence, ideas stated in the Upanisads are often found here, sometimes using the very words or expressions.

9. But the greatest achievement of the Bhagavata is the projection of the Krsna saga and the Krsna personality in the most poetical, and yet, powerful and graceful language. If Krsna remains as the darling of millions of Hindu hearts even today, it is not a little due to this matchless work.

Synopsis of the Contents

The Bhagavata as available today has been divided into 12 skandhas or books, further divided into 335 adhayayas or chapters, containing in all a little more than 14,000 slokas or verses. However, tradition has

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

always put it at 18,000 verses[4]. With several unknown or variable factors involved, fixing the dates the ancient Hindu scriptures, has always been a difficult exercise. The Bhagavata is no exception to this. The internal evidence of the work, viz., Suka teaching it to king Pariksit, takes the date to the beginning of the Kali-yuga, around 3000 BC[5].

The book covers the last part of the story of the Pandavas, the reign of the king Pariksit, his earning the wrath of sage due to an indiscreet act and his curse to die within 7 days due to the bite of the serpent Taksaka. When the king has resigned himself to his fate, the sage Suka arrives. He is respectfully received and questioned by Pariksit as to what brings about spiritual good to a person threatened with imminent death like himself. Suka starts the narration.

The very first verse is marvellous. It says:

'He from whom the creation, sustenance and dissolution of the universe take place; who is both the material and the instrumental cause of it; who is omniscient; who is the only One having self-mastery, being the one independent entity; who illumined the mind of Brahma with the Vedic revelation whose wisdom is the wonder of even the greatest of sages; in whom the worlds, the manifestation of the three gunas, subsist in reality without in the least affecting Him, just as the combination of material elements like fire, water, and earth subsist in their causes without

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

changing their elemental nature; in whose light of consciousness there is no place for anything false –on that Truth Supreme we meditate.' The verse has a touch of the Gayatri Mantra of the Vedas.

What is that Param Satyam, or Supreme Truth? Janma adi asya yatah: it is 'That from which the universe has come, in which it now rests, and to which it will ultimately go'.

According to the Upanisads, that source is Brahman, the Ultimate Reality, which is of the nature of Pure Consciousness. It is non-dual. Therefore, the Bhagvatam says, if the universe has come form that Supreme Reality, it cannot be unreal.

Steps in Spiritual Growth

In the second chapter of the first skandha, the Bhagavatam delineates the various steps in spiritual growth in the verses, the meaning of which is:-:

'Krsna, the friend of devotees, purifies the hearts of those who take his name. He manifests in the hearts of those who hear the accounts of His deeds, and erases all the evil tendencies blocking their spiritual development.'

'When the obstructing evil tendencies are mitigated through constant application to the service of holy men and the study of Holy Scriptures, one develops a steady and unshakable love for the Lord of abounding glory and grace.'

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

'With the growth of devotion, the mind is freed from the agitations of instinctive passions like greed and sexuality_the productsof rajas and tamas-and gets established in the peace and poise of sattva.'

In the aspirant, who has, through the practice of devotion, attained to purity and poise of mind, as also to freedom from every form of worldly attachments, is generated the realization of the Supreme Being as an absolute Reality.

'When the Supreme Soul is thus realized within oneself; the knots of the heart that make one feel oneself as an ego (one with body) are severed; the doubts of the mind are dispelled; and all the accumulated karmas of the past, as also those in the offing, are liquidated.'

Kapila's Instruction

In the third skandha, there is the story of an Incarnation of the Divine. There God came as Kapila, who wanted to leave home and go to the forest. His mother, Devahuti, said to Kapila: 'My dear son, before you go, please give me some spiritual instructions.' Thereupon, we find Kapila giving spiritual instructions to his mother, and therein we find the three verses whose meaning is given below-is specially significant for our people today:

'I am always present in all being as their very Self. Insulting Me there, if people worship Me only in

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

images, such worship is only an empty show.'

'I am not at all pleased, O sinless one, by being worshiped in an image, accompanied by various and high items of ritual worship, by those who insult Me in the various living being.'

'Therefore, arhayet, i.e.archyet, or worship Me, in all beings-for I am the One Self in all, and have already made a temple for Me in them—through dāna, by removal of their felt wants, and mana, through respect to the ones served, and also maitrya, through an attitude of friendliness, and abhinnena caksusa, with an eye of non-separateness.'

Thus, in this twenty-ninth chapter of the third skandha, we come across a remarkable exposition of the truest spiritual life. However, one great ideal that is thrust again and again upon the readers is: God is to be worshipped not only in a temple, not only in the image, but also in the hearts of all. Why heart? Because God dwells in the hearts of all.

The Story of Dhruva

Then there is the touching story of Dhruva in the eighth chapter of the fourth book. Dhruva is the son of king Uttanapada, through his wife Suniti. Uttanapada had another wife named Suruci. She was his favourite wife, so naturally, her son, Uttama, was very dear to him. One day the five-year-old boy, Dhruva, noticed that his father was fondling his

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

brother, Uttama, who was sitting on his lap. So, he too went to sit on the lap of his father, Suruci saw this and got angry. She reproached Dhruva saying that he had no right to sit on the lap of his father: 'Were you born of my womb, then only you could sit on your father's lap' Dhruva was very upset. He went to his mother, Suniti, and started crying. Suniti said, 'What can I do, my son? I am really helpless. Pray to God. He is the only true refuge and friend of the helpless. Only He can help you'.

Internally wounded by his father's neglect, Dhruva, a child of five, went into the forest to meditate on Hari, the Lord. On the way, he met Narada, who first tried to dissuade him from the risky venture, and advised him to return. Narada told him, 'You are a Ksatriya boy, why are you here? It is a disgrace for you to be here'. However, Dhruva was firm. He said, he must go to worship the Divine. At this Narada was impressed by the child's determination and his bold ksatriya spirit. He blessed the child with the Divine mantra, *om namo bhagavate vasudevaya*, and gave him instructions on how to meditate. Dhruva meditated on God as instructed. After six months of meditation and hard life, the indwelling God of all, Hari, appeared in front of Dhruva, who however, was then experiencing Him in his heart, with his eyes still closed. He was seeing the Lord within, but the Lord was already standing in front of him. What did the

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

Lord do? He disappeared from his heart, and as soon as He disappeared from his heart, Dhruva opened his eyes and saw, with immense joy, the smiling and blissful Lord in front. Seeing this predicament of His devotee, the Lord touched Dhruva's cheek with His divine instrument, the conch the symbol of knowledge (brahmamayena kambuna). The lord gave Dhruva the high station of Dhruva naksatra.

Superiority of Human Life

The theme of innate human greatness is expounded again and again in the Upanisads, in the *Srimad Bhagavatam*, and in the Buddha's teachings. The human being has a profound divine potential within him or her, which can be realized in this very body, in this very life. The development of the spiritual paths of *jnana and bhakti*, providing for spiritual realization here and now, made for the devaluation of all post-mortem heaven theologies in India. In the fifth *skandha of the Bhagavatam*, we find the famous *sloka* which declares it is a privilege to be born in Bharatavarsa (India), and this truth is openly proclaimed by even gods and goddesses in heaven. There is a scene where the gods and goddesses sing thus:

'This, verily, is what the gods sing: What blessed deeds have these people done that they have achieved birth in Bharata as human beings, fit for the worship

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

of Mukunda, the Indwelling God, who seems to be pleased with them! We also eagerly desire the same.'

In the *Bhagavatam* too, this idea comes once again. It says that this earth is everything. We can do everything here. We can realize out true nature *here.*

The Story of Prahlada

Let us now deal with the seventh *skandha* of the *Srimad Bhagavatam*, where we find the fascinating story of the greatest devotee of God,, Prahlada. Prahlada, the five-year-old child of Hiranyakasipu, was absolutely pure, and had imbibed love for the Indwelling God Hari, from birth, even in the womb. However, Hiranyakasipu was a dictator like Hitler, who hated all gods and goddesses. He believed in no God above him and held himself as supreme. He desired to bring up his child Prahlada also in this totalitarian philosophy. But Prahlada said, 'Father, you are only a human being and will die one day. I believe that it is better to renounce this life and go to the forest to take refuge in Hari who is Supreme.' Hiranyakasipu was very disturbed and started a teacher to remove all these notions about God and the Supreme Being from the mind of his son. But Prahlada was so strong and steady that when the teacher was away, he would ask his fellow-students not to accept his false teachings. On one such occasion, Prahlada gave a talk to them, which contains high spiritual

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

ideas. Of the twenty-eight verse, I give here two of the important ones:

'Wise ones will practise in this very life the Bhagavata dharma from childhood itself, because the human body is rare acquisition, and also it is not permanent, but (when put to good use) is capable of producing great results.'

'Pleasing Acyuta, i.e.Hari, O children of the Asura, is not at all a hard or difficult propostion, because He is the One Self of all beings and is the Truth present even now everywhere.'

'My dear friends try to practise the Bhagavata dharma right from childhood, because this human life is rare, and in this human life only can you realize God.' The wise therefore worship God in this very life. What is this Bhagavata dharma? It essentially constitutes seeing and serving the One Infinite All-loving Self in oneself and in others, and that infuses love and service in all inter-human relations. There is divinity in all, as well as in me. So, establish happy relations with others and have the spirit of service to other people. This body is just an instrument; any moment it may go. So, practise Bhagavata dharma seriously.

Ultimately Narasimha (God in the form of a man-lion) came and killed Hiranyakasipu. Everyone was frightened at the sight of the face of Narasimha. The only one, who was absolutely fearless, was the boy,

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

Prahlada. He smiled and prayed to Narasimha to withdraw His anger and make His face softer (VII.9.14). These sweet words pleased Narasimha who offered him a boon saying:

'O Prahlada, virtuous boy! May all that is good and auspicious befall you! O the best of Asuras! I am highly pleased with you Ask for whatever boons you want. I grant all that a devotee wants.'

But Prahlada loved God for love's sake. Therefore, he replied:

'I am not a vanik, a trader, in love. I only love you for love's sake, and I do not want anything in return,' said Prahlada. The Lord was highly pleased with him.

In the bhakti scriptures, God is described as the embodiment of pure and inexpressible love. Some stories in this book present examples of the highest love. There is also reference in the tenth skandha to a character, namely Kamsa, who hated Sri Krsna, which eventually made him attain salvation. It shows that even hatred can be a form of love!

The bhakti of this book emphasizes the intimacy of the bhakta with God. There is no element of fear in that bhakti. The devotee talks to the Lord, sings His praises, experiences the ecstasy of love of the Lord, and even blesses the Lord. With God within oneself, he or she feels oneness with God.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

Suka and Prahlada thus represent the highest type of bhakti-love for love's sake. However, bhakti can be of different types. In the eleventh skandha (20. 8) Bhagavan Sri Krsna Says:

'He who, by good fortune, loves to hear about Me, and who is neither averse to work nor too much attached to the fruits thereof, derives benefit from bhakti-yoga.' LOVE. Bertrand Russell says in one place that the world is in a mess today. We can solve this mess if there is a little love in the heart of man.

Gajendra Moksa

There are various themes and various personalities, in this book, including animals, which illustrate this central them of pure bhakti. There is a popular Gajendra Moksa episode in the eighth skandha-the story of how God gave salvation even to an elephant. The highest Vedantic teaching is contained in the hymn of praise sung by the elephant.

'Om, salutations to the Blessed One, whose presence makes the world suffused with consciousness and who is the Self of all. I meditate on that Supreme Lord, the primordial source of all.'

'I take refuge in that *Svayambhu*, or self-existing Being, *in Whom* is this universe, from *Whom* is this universe, by *Whom* is this universe, *Who Himself* is this universe, and Who is also beyond this manifested universe and the unmanifested *Prakrti.'*

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

Churning of the Ocean

Then in the seventh chapter of the eight *skandha*, the subject of *samudra manthan*, the churning of the ocean, is described. There we find gods and *asuras* have joined to churn the ocean. As the churning started, many good things, as well as, a tremendous poison, *Kalakuta,* came up. The gods became frightened, because nobody could handle that poison that was burning the world. They went to Brahma for a solution. But he said, 'Sorry, I can't do anything. This poison is too hard for me.' Everybody said more or less the same thing. Therefore, the gods decided to go to Mount Kailas, where Siva lived, to get some help. 'Siva was in deep meditation, but he found everybody in distress. So he became compassionate and said, 'What can I do for you?' The gods said, 'The world is burning; please come and save us'.

Siva then went to the ocean and saw how frightened the people were. He said, 'I shall drink this poison. I may die as a result, but the world will be saved.' He took the poison in his hand and quietly swallowed it. The poison was very powerful; it stayed stuck to the throat. From that day Mahadeva had a new name, Nilakantha, 'the Blue-throated'. This myth has profound meaning, and the moral of this story is given in one sloka:

The world is in distress. Naturally, we want to have such compassionate people. When we become

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

compassionate, then and alone is our worship of the Divine real. We must try to remove the distress of others. That is real spirituality. 'Why is the Supreme Purusa, or the Divine, to be worshipped? Akhilatmanah, because, 'He is the Self of all', is the answer.

Our brain is the place of Siva. If we can manifest a little Siva nature in our character, we can digest all worldly poison. Husband and wife live together to churn the ocean, to get or in the process, and affects human relationships.

One day it explodes, and the suffering becomes unbearable. But if you can digest some of the poison through your Siva nature, there will be no problem at all. That is the meaning of this myth. Siva actually is not sitting in Kailas. That is a myth. But He is a reality in human life. So, that is a wonderful story in the Srimad Bhagavatam.

The story of Mahabali

Later, in the fifteenth chapter of this eighth skandha, the Bhagavatam narrates the story of Mahabali, a great king. It is interesting in this connection to note that his country had no caste system-perfect equality existed between human beings. However, custodians of that time did not like this. So, God incarnated as Vamana Avatara. One sloka tells about the sign of God's grace on a human being. What is that sign?

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

Here, in the following verse, Lord, as Vamana, expounds the signs that indicate the descent of Divine grace on any person:

'If any one who, though endowed with high birth, good actions, youth, beauty, knowledge, and other things such as wealth, does not become arrogant, know this to be the sign of My grace.'

So the verse says, if you have good birth, good education, plenty of money and power, yet you do not become arrogant and proud, that shows that Divine grace is on you. Today, in India, many people hold power, and possess great wealth. They will also get Divine grace if they do not become arrogant and proud. That is the lesson we learn from this sloka.

The story of Yayati

The ninth skandha contains the story of Emperor Yayati, very relevant to the present consumerist age. He was a pleasure-seeking consumerist par excellence, but he attained the spirit of renunciation after deep thought and self-questioning, and proclaimed an eternal truth.

'Never can desire be quenched by repeated enjoyment of desires; like butter poured on fire, with a view to quenching it desire only gets inflamed thereby.'

'When a human being does not have any attitude of attachment or hatred to any being, and remains

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

always even minded, to that person, all places always become suffused with happiness.'

Krsnavatara, And the Glory of Human Being

Now we come to the tenth skandha, known as the Bhagavata Pradhanam, which contains the full and beautiful narration of Krsna's childhood lilas and of his variegated life. It begins with his birth at Mathura in Kamsa's prison, in the form of a divine child, as the son of Devaki and Vasudeva. Sage Vyasa[6] composed the Bhagavata solely to express his devotion to the Lord by describing His glory through the Krsna incarnation. The Bhagavata declares that Krsna is God Himself. Since God is perfect, Krsna, His human manifestation, too is perfect.

Suka had earlier referred to Krsna, along with other avataras. However, Pariksit was not satisfied. He therefore requested suka to narrate the story of Krsna in detail. Then Suka said, 'Yes, I shall do so'. That sloka is beautiful.

'Hearing these excellent question, Suka, the greatest of devotees, congratulated Emperor Pariksit, and began to narrate the story of Krsna's life and doings, which has got the power of eradicating the sinful influence of Kali.'

What is Krsnacaritam? Bhagavata Pradhanah, the essential element of the Srimad Bhagavata

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

Pradhanah, the essential element of the Srimad Bhagavatam, and Kalikalmasaghnam, it destroys the evils of Kali. After the fourteenth verse of the first chapter of the Suka begins the story of Krsna's birth in prison, as the divine child of Vasudeva and Devaki. Highly philosophical verses now follow. Knowing the Divine stature of the child, first the father salutes him in beautiful philosophically composed hymns of praise, followed by equally beautiful mother's hymns. I would like to refer to one verse of the mother's hymn:

'Mortal man, as soon as he or she is born, is pursued by the snake of death. Full of fear, he or she wanders to various lokas, but cannot get safety anywhere. By chance, he or she gets a place at your Lotus Feet and experiences freedom from tension and fear, since death finds it impossible to even approach near your feet.'

So, in the third chapter of this tenth skandha is this Devaki's prayer. We want to escape death, so we eat and drink, get education, marry and rear a family, perform a few punya karmas or virtuous deeds; but death is always behind us like a serpent creeping towards us. Even in heaven, the mortal human being cannot find any resting place, any security. But then, by chance, he or she gets devotion to god and protection at Sri Krsna's blessed feet. That immediately brings security, peace, and fearlessness, for death has not the power even to approach that magic circle of immortality-his holy feet.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

The stories told about Krsna's childhood have fascinated the Indian mind for centuries. One such is the story of Putana, who was sent by Kamsa to kill the baby Krsna by sucking him with her poisoned breast. But the child, while sucking her breast, sucked away her very life leaving her dead. The story has been illustrated in Kathakali and other dance forms.

The story of Krsna proceeds. What is important to note here is, Krsna's avatara represents the glory of the human being. God becoming a human being raises humans to a higher level, and gods cannot do any harm to human beings if they are true to themselves. Thus, in the story of Krsna, we find the account of Indra, the chief of the gods, who played a trick on Krsna because Krsna showed him scant respect by advising his people to stop the usual offerings to Indra, and make those offerings to Mount Govardhana which does better service to humanity than the far away Indra and the gods. Indra, in anger, and to teach a lesson to this human rebel, caused heavy rain to fall, which caused much misery to the people. But Krsna protected all of them under Mount Govardhana, by lifting it with his little finger, and Indra, recognizing the superior power of the human Krsna, came and bowed to him, and asked pardon saying; 'You are really great, I am nothing'. The Divine coming in human form, raises the dignity and greatness of the human being.

The same thing happened also with Brahma, the

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

Creator. He also played a trick on the boy Krsna, hiding all the cows and all his playmates. But Krsna recreated them all, and life went on as usual, seeing which, Brahma was forced to acknowledge the superior power of the cowherd boy, and he came and saluted him, a simple human being. Complete manifestation of the Divine. There are other stories also like The Brahamana Sudama is blessed by LORD Krishana. The story of king Ambarisa, is narrated in skanda 9 and of ajmaila in skanda six.

The Brahmana Sudama[7] is Blessed by Lord Krsna

[7]Sudama was a poor school mate friend of lord Krsna He was a perfect Brahman and a staunch devotee of the lord. As he had nothing with him, his wife sent him with some rice to be given as gift to lord Krishna when He meets him in his palace at Dwarka. There is a fascinating description in chapter 80 and 81 of the Skandha IX of Bhagavatam how lord Krsna welcomes his old friend and bestows a big fortune. On return he was surprised to find a big palace in his native place instead of a small hut in which he was living. The palace was surrounded by many columns of jewels.

Sri Krsna's Praise of Trees

Let me quote a few beautiful verses from the twenty-second chapter of the tenth skandha, where we find

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

Krsna praising the trees:

'Friends, look at these noble trees, which live entirely for the sake of others, themselves bearing all the rigours of wind, rain, heat, dew, etc., but protecting us from them.'

'How covetable is their life, providing nourishment to all beings that come to them! No one seeking sustenance from them has to go away disappointed, just like needy people seeking help from good men.

'They fulfil the needs of beings and other creatures, with their leaves, flowers, fruits, shade, roots, bark, timber, sweet smelling sap. Ashes, wood, and tender shoots.'

'Man's life in the world is meaningful and fruitful (only) to the extent that his energies, wealth, intelligence, and speech are utilized for the welfare of other.'

Gopika Gitam

Then we come to that wonderful thirty-first chapter of the tenth skandha, which is known as the Gopika Gitam. The Gopika Gitam, the Gopis singing the praises of Sri Krsna, forms an important part of this skandha.

On the eve of Sri Krsna's Imminent Departure

We now come to the eleventh skandha. In this skandha, we have several episodes such as the

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

destruction of the clan of Yadavas, Sri Krsna's final departure from the world etc. then we also have some of the profoundest teachings of Bhagavatam such as Navayogi Samvada, Uddhava Gita etc.

Here we find Yadavas becoming very strong. They could become unruly and impossible to handle. That is why, even before his departure, Sri Krsna brought about the destruction of Yadu clan through the curse pronounced by some holy men.

Balarama also gave up his body sitting in a yogic posture on the seashore. Seeing his exit, Sri Krsna sat in his divine form on the ground under an asvattha tree with his left leg on the right thigh. Mistaking the feet of Sri Krsna to be the face of an animal, a hunter, Jara by name, shot an arrow at him. Coming near and seeing Sri Krsna, he became terrified with fear and fell at his feet with prayers for pardon. Krsna told him not to entertain fear, saying that everything happened according to His own will. Thereafter, He blessed the hunter that he would attain heave, and He himself went away to Vaikuntha, his eternal abode, thus putting an end to His Lila on this earth in this form. Coming to know about the departure of the Lord, the whole of Dwaraka was overwhelmed with sorrow. Arjuna also became grief-stricken and performed the funeral rites for Yadavas, and the city was inundated by the ocean. So that is the story of the demise of the Yadu clan.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

Then, in this skandha, we have a beautiful exposition of Bhagavata Dharma in the form of the discourse of Nabasyogis, i.e. Nine yogis, in reply to the questions posed by King Nimi. They were the sons of King Rsabha. They renounced the world at an early age and attained to highest spiritual illumination. Established in the Atman, they went about unclad. Once they happened to arrive at the Brahmasatra, i.e. a sacrificial festival that was being conducted by king Nimi. Seeing those great ones who were shining like the sun himself, King Nimi honoured them with great respect and devotion. Thereafter he put them nine questions on man's spiritual well-being. They all relate to the Bhagavata Dharma, the characteristics of a bhakta Incarnation, etc. this episode of the Navayogis forms one of the most illuminating sections of the Bhagavatam, whererin the whole doctrine of bhakti and jnana are dealt with in brief compass with great devotional fervour. It is, in fact, the Bhagavata in a nutshell.

Uniqueness of the Human form

The humanistic element is strong in this great book, Illustrated by stories, the Bhagavatam shows that the human being is far superior to gods. Since he or she has the Divine Atman within, he or she has the organic capacity to realize this truth, and this possibility is in you and me, and all human beings.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

In the eleventh skandha seeing the ominous signs all around, Uddhava, the great friend and devotee of Sri Krsna, realized that the Lord would soon exit from the world. So he approached the Lord with great devotion, and requested him: 'O Lord! Before you go away, give us some spiritual advice. We want to hear this from you.' Thereupon follows the elaborate conversation between the Master and the disciple. These conversations form the important content of this eleventh skandha, and is known as Uddahava Gita.

However, in the human system we have some freedom to work out our own destiny. Nature, of course, plays some part, but we can go beyond nature. Our own true nature is divine. So, *turnam yateta*, the sooner you struggle to achieve that freedom, that *nihsreyasa*, that *moksa,* the better. Why? Because, any moment our body may go.

There is one passage in the Katha Upanisad that says that our body has muscular energy, but it is very ordinary, very gross. Inside the nervous system, there is a little more subtle energy. Still deeper is the psyche. That is more subtle, and has more energy. Thus, we find that human resources are organized on an ascending scale of subtlety, immensity, and inwardness, and the highest is the Atman.

The Chandogya Upanisad says tat tvam asi, 'You

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

are that'. You are not the tiny genetic system. You are that Infinite Atman; that is your true nature. It gives us that teaching through the path of bhakti. Through bhakti, we can achieve the highest spiritual realization. However, bhakti, as pointed out earlier, has many dimensions. We have to develop dynamic spirituality. Our spiritual consciousness has to be awakened and gradually raised. *Tomader caitanya hok,* 'May you become spiritually awakened'-that was how Sri Ramakrishna blessed every person. The *Srimad Bhagavatam* also emphasizes this idea again and again.

No Conflict Between Science and Spirituality

In India, you do not find any conflict between physical science and spirituality. This comes from Krsna's own mouth in the eleventh skandha. There is the parting message from Sri Krsna to his disciple and minister, Uddhava.

'One's guru is oneself, particularly in the case of human beings (not Nature, as is the case with all non-human species), for he or she raises one's life to a cultured level through (applying the scientific method of) direct sensory observation, and application of inductive and deductive inference.'

'A human being has one more possibility; the wise ones among them can realize, hidden within oneself,

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

Me, the infinite One, fully endowed with all powers, by becoming masters of the science and technique of spirituality.' Man's a guru is his own self, while an animal's guru is nature. Man is his own master. Human beings can also realize Me hidden within them.

The Story of the Avadhuta

As part of Uddhava Gita, we have the story of the Avadhuta, who learnt spiritual lessons from twenty-four sources whom he regarded as his gurus. Among them, one is very special. She was courtesan, Pingala by name. In one of her despondent moods, she gets a great feeling of revulsion against worldliness. This makes her thoughtful. And at this dawn of renunciation, she sings a song. It tells us about the abominable nature of this body in a very vivid language, and also about the utter foolishness of running after the pleasures of the body. Finally, we see her making a firm resolve to give up all hankerings for sense pleasures and take refuge in the Lord alone.

Towards the end of these instructions, Uddhava asks Sri Krsna, 'O Lord! You have told me so many things; that is all right. But you now please tell me something concrete for practising.' In reply, Sri Krsna exhorts him to follow Bhagavata Dharma. Its fundamental doctrines are: performance of one's actions as offering

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

to the Lord in all the beings . Almost all the important teachings of Bhagavatam are expounded in this skandha (Srimad Bhagavatam, skandha XI, chapter 29).

This great book ends its fascinating exposition of spiritual life with the following great and very popular opening verse in the last chapter of its twelfth and last skandha:

'Whom Brahma, Varuna, Indra, Rudra, and the Maruta praise in divine hymns, Whom the singers of Sama, through the Vedas with their accessories and the Upanisads, praise in hymns, Whom the Yogis realize with one-pointed mind in the state of meditation, and whose limit (being infinite) all the devas and asuras do not perceive-to that Divine Being be our salutation.'

Srimad Bhagavatam- A Great Text of Jnana and Bhakti

This great book combines both jnana and bhakti. The presence of jnana makes bhakti free from narrowness and sectarianism. It is that Advaitic bhakti that pervades the books. That bhakti is further reinforced by a third value, namely, vairagya, renunciation, the force that releases ethical and humanistic values, and helps a consumerist society to save itself. It helps to let the mammal in us die so that the man in us may live,

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

as forcefully expressed by the biologist, the late Sir Julian Huxley, in p.575 of his authoritative books Evolution: a New Synthesis.

Bhakti and bhajan have been two of the greatest Indian assets. They gave joy to human life, for the high and low in society, and made for less dependence on external stimuli like drugs and drink.

Sri Ramakrishna was very fond of this Bhagavata book. Swami Saradhananda, in his Sri Ramakrishna the Great Master, mentions (Vol. I, p. 277): One day, during the sadhana of madhura bhava, Sri Ramakrishna, while listening to the reading of Srimad Bhagavatam, went into ecstasy and had the vision of Sri Krsna. He saw a beam of light coming out of Sri Krsna's feet and touching the sacred book, and then it touched his heart, and remained simultaneously touching all the three of them for some time. From this vision, he had a firm conviction that all these three, though appear as different entities, are one and the same thing. So he used to say, 'The three- the Bhagavata, the Bhakta, and the Bhagavan- are One, and the One is the three.'

The Bhagavatam is indeed a great holy book. It is popular throughout India. But, as I said, our social, life has not been much influenced by the teachings of the Bhagavatam. In India, there is no dearth of spiritual teachings, but the social system is

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

completely anti-Vedantic, anti-Upanisadic, and anti-Gita. To correct that is what must be done in the modern period. It is for this that Ramakrishna, Vivekananda, Holy Mother, and others have come. We have problems no doubt. But, these can be solved if those in high position, can bring a change in character. But love for oneself can bring only moral ruin. What has happened in India is that before Independence, people loved the Nation; they sacrificed everything for the Nation. After Independence, we started loving ourselves. As a result, corruption started. What do we see in India today? rampant corruption.

I am sure, as Swamiji predicted, that India in the modern period is going to be greater than she ever was in the past. The whole world will look to India for spiritual inspiration.

Conclusion

This Bhagavata bhakti, or as Sri Ramakrishna calls it Naradiya Bhakti, will play a great part in the spiritual enrichment of humanity in the coming centuries. The Bhagavata Mahatmya section of the Padma Purana also predicts such a spiritual upheaval in one of its important verses, with which I would like to conclude this discourse:

'The bhakti, which carries with it the aesthetic delight of Prema, or pure love, and which is

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

strengthened by jnana and vairagya, knowledge and renunciation, will then have free play in every home and in every human heart.'

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

Chapter 4

Bhagavadgita
Quintessence of the Gita

Bhagavad-gita is also known as Gitopanisad. It is the essence of Vedic knowledge and one of the most important Upanisads in Vedic literature. Bhagavad-gita should be taken or accepted as it is directed by the speaker Himself. The speaker of Bhagavad-gita is Lord Sri Krsna. He is mentioned on every page of Bhagavad-gita as the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Bhagavan. It is a book containing the highest esoteric doctrines. Gita uttered by The Lord is such an incomparable book that not a word will be found in it, which is devoid of some spiritual import. Its thoughts are so deep that none can arrive at their end even after constant study throughout a life time.

Here the Lord informs Arjuna in chapter 4 that this

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

system of yoga, the Bhagavad-Gita, was first spoken to the sun-god, and the sun-god , imparted it to his son Manu and Manu explained it to Iksvaku, and in that way, by disciplic succession, one speaker after another, this yoga system has been coming down from the ancient times. But in the course of time it has become lost. Consequently the Lord has to speak it again, this time to Arjuna on the Battlefield of Kuruksetra, about 5000 years ago.

The Bhagavad-gita the subject matter deals with the Isvara, the supreme controller, and the jivas, the controlled living entities. Prakrti (material nature) and time (the duration of existence of the whole universe, of the manifestation of material nature) and karma (activity) are also discussed.

Another reason for the importance of the Gita is its universal applicability The Gita as a doctrine does not confine itself to any particular creed. It helps all human beings in understanding the problems of day to day life. In the Tenth Chapter, Sri Krsna says : 'In whichever way people approach me, as long as they do it with faith, I make that resolve firm.'

The quintessence of God Krishna's teachings is the practice of self-control, self less action and complete surrender to God. Principal teaching of the Gita are: For His own rrealization, God has laid down in the Gita two principal ways - (1)Sankhyayoga, and (2) Karmayoga. Of these-

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

(1) All objects being unreal like the water in a mirage, or the creation of a dream, Gunas, which are the products of Maya, move in the Gunas, understanding this the sense of doesrship should be lost with regard to all activities of the mind, senses and the body(Chapter V verses 8,9), and being established ever in identity with all-pervading God, the embodiment of Truth, Knowledge and Bliss, consciousness should be lost of the existence of any other being but God. This is the practice of Sankhayoga.

(2) Regarding everything as belonging to God, maintaining in success or failure, renouncing attachment and the desire for fruit, all works should be done according to God's behests and only for the sake of God (Chapter II verse 48; Chapter V verse 10); and, with utmost faith and reverence, surrendering oneself to God through mind, speech and body, constant meditation on God's Form with remembrance of His names, virtues and glory, should be practised (Chapter VI verse 47). This is the practice of Karmayoga by disinterested action.

The result of both these practices being one, they are regarded as one in reality (Chapter V verses 4,5). But during the period of practice, they being different according to the qualifications of the Sadhaka the two paths have been separately described (Chapter III verse 3).

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

There are four paths to divine union-Jnana-yoga, the way of wisdom, of intellectual discrimination; Bhakti-yoga, the way of emotional outpouring towards a personalized image of the divine; Karma-yoga, the way of dedicated action; and Raja-yoga, the way of psychic discipline, of Pranayama, the discipline of breathing control, and the development of the kundaline sakti (serpent power) within us. These are the four main types of yogas that we have in our tradition, and for each there are scriptures which deal with various aspects yoga . But the Gita is unique in that, in the short compass of 700 slokas, it integrates these four yogas into a single, unified path.

The Gita points out that it is no longer enough for us to follow only one of these paths. We have to be all four. Every individual has to develop his mind, his heart, his physical capacity and his inner spiritual power, and that is the important message of the Gita. It brings us to what Sri Aurobindo calls Purnayoga, an integrated yoga.

The Eternal Soul

Arjuna's is torn between love and duty-to fight or not to fight. He doesn't want to kill his guru Dronacharya or his Grandfather Bhisma or other kith and kins. Here, Lord Krishan teaches Arjuna that the soul is eternal.Know that by which all this is pervaded, to be

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

imperishable. No one can bring about the destruction of this immutable principle.

He who looks on Atman as the slayer, and he who looks upon Atman as slain-neither of these has right under-standing. It slays not, nor is slain.

It is never born nor dies; nor, having once been, does It again cease to be. Unborn, eternal, permanent, and primeval, it is not slain when the body is slain.

O Arjuna, this Atman is imperishable, constant, birth-less and immutable. How, and whom, can it then slay or cause to be slain?

Just as a person casts off worn-out clothes and puts on new ones, the Atman casts off worn-out bodies and enters into others that are new.

The Atman in everyone's body is eternally indestructible, O Arjuna; therefore, you ought not to grieve for any creature.

He who sees that actions are in every way performed only by Nature and likewise sees the Atman as the non-doer, he alone sees in truth.

The soul is never born nor dies; nor does it become only after being born. For it is unborn, eternal, everlasting and ancient; even though the body is slain, the soul is not.

Incapable of being cut; it is proof against fire, impervious to water, eternal, omnipresent, immovable, constant and everlasting.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

Just the one sun illumines the whole world, even so, O Arjuna, does the embodied Atman illumine all bodies.

THE PATH OF KNOWLEDGE

He who has mastered his senses, is exclusively devoted to his practice and is full of faith, attains Knowledge; having had the revelation of Truth, he immediately attains supreme peace (in the form of God-Realization).

As the rising sun dispels the darkness of night, so the knowledge of Atman drives away all delusion.

Blessed is human birth; even the dwellers in heaven desire this birth; for true knowledge and pure love may be attained only by a human being.

Knowing life to be transitory, wake up from this dream of ignorance and strive to attain knowledge and freedom before death claims you.

The sacrifice through knowledge is superior to sacrifice performed with materials. All actions in their entirety, O Arjuna, culminate in knowledge.

Acquire that knowledge through inquiry and humble service. The wise who are knowers of the Truth will instruct you in wisdom.

As fire well kindled reduces fuel to ashes, so the fire of knowledge reduces all karma to ashes.

Verily, there exists no purifier on earth, equal to

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

knowledge. A man who becomes perfect in yoga finds it within himself in course of time.

Humility, unostentatiousness, harmlessness, forbearance, uprightness, service to guru, purity, steadiness and self-control—all this is called knowledge.

Dispassion for sense-objects, absence of egotism, seeing misery and evil in birth, death, old age and disease—all these are the virtues of a man of knowledge.

THE YOGA OF ACTION

On Arjuna's query Lord says, have trust in God and do your duty. This is also necessary because ordinary men follow the great in achieving the standard set by them. Talking about Himself, Shri Krishna said that though He did not need anything, he kept on working. It was essential for the wise to show light to the unwise and encourage them to work along right lines. In the case of Sankhya yogi, Sadhana (action) proceeds along the path of knowledge:where as in the case of Karmayogi it proceeds along the path of action. Now God explain to Arjuna what is action and what is inaction? Even men of intelligence are puzzled over this question.

Established in yoga, O Arjuna, perform actions, giving up attachment, and unconcerned as to success or failure.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

Perform the prescribed duties; for action is superior to inaction; moreover, if you are inactive, even the maintenance of your body will be impossible.

But that person who delights only in the Atman, is satisfied with the Atman, is contented in the Atman alone, and verily has no duties to perform.

Therefore, always perform unattached action which has to be done; verily man attains the highest by performing action unattached.

Duty actions are done in all cases by the Gunas of Prakriti. But he whose mind is deluded with egoism, thinks, "I am the doer."

Better is one's ownduty imperfectly performed, than the duty of another well-performed. Better is death in the doing of one's own dharma; the dharma of another is fraught with fear.

He who performs actions dedicating them to God and giving up attachment, is not touched by sin, as a lotus leaf by water.

Renunciation and the performance of selfless action both lead to the highest good, but of the two, the performance of selfless action is superior to the renunciation of action.

Performing all works always, taking refuge in Me, he attains the eternal and immutable state through My grace.

He whose actions are free from the hankering for

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

desires, whose actions have been burnt by the fire of knowledge, him the wise call a sage.

SIGNS OF A MAN OF STEADY WISDOM

Arjuna asked Shri Krishna why people committed sin against their will as if driven by an inner force. Shri Krishna replied that desire, anger and passion were at the root of all sins.

When a man, O Arjuna, gives up completely all the desires of the mind, and himself delights in his Atman alone, then he is said to be a man of steady wisdom.

He who is unattached everywhere, who neither welcomes nor hates when he obtains good or evil, has his wisdom firmly fixed.

When he completely withdraws the senses from their objects as a tortoise draws in its limbs, then his wisdom is steady.

When a person thinks deeply of sense-objects, he feels an attachment for them. Attachment gives rise to desire and desire breeds anger. Form anger comes delusion which results in loss of memory. The loss of memory causes destruction of discrimination and from the ruin of discrimination the man perishes.

The man of self-control, on the other hand, moving among sense-objects, with his senses under restraint, and free from attachment and aversion, attains serenity of mind.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

That person who lives completely free from all desires, without longing, devoid of the idea of ownership and egoism, attains peace.

He who sees God abiding equally in all beings, the Imperishable amidst the perishable-he sees indeed!

He whose mind is not attached to anything, who has subdued his heart, and who is free from all longings-he, by renunciation attains that supreme state of freedom from action.

This is the Brahmic State, O Arjuna. Attaining it, one is no longer deluded. Being established therein even in the hour of death, one attains final liberation in Brahman.

THE YOGA OF DEVOTION

If a meditative man constantly worships Me through the path of devotion, all the desires of his heart are destroyed, for I reside in his heart.

Four types of virtuous men worship me. They are-the man in distress, the man seeking knowledge, the man seeking enjoyment and the man endowed with wisdom.

I confer on the devotee unflinching faith on whichever image of form he choses to worship.

Whatever is acquired through works, austerities, knowledge, dispassion, yoga, charity, or through any other means of well-being, *my devotee easily attain it all through devotion to Me.*

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

I look after the accession to and maintenance of the welfare of such ever-devout persons, who think of nothing else and worship Me through meditation.

By devotion he knows Me truly, how much and what I am. Then, having known Me truly, he forthwith enters into Me.

Many are the means described for the attainment of the highest good such as love, performance of duty, self-control, truthfulness, sacrifices, gifts, austerity, charity, vows, observance of moral precepts. etc.

But of all I could name, verily love is the highest—love and devotion that make one forgetful of everything else, love that unites the lover with Me.

Let not your mind run after the things of the world, for they are empty as dreams. Give your mind to Me, devote yourself to Me, meditate on Me.

O Uddhava, neither yoga, nor knowledge, nor austerity, nor renunciation captivates Me so much as a heightened devotion to Me.

I, the dear Atman of the pious, am attainable by devotion alone, which is the outcome of faith.

Those who, renouncing all actions in Me and being attracted to Me, worship Me with unswerving devotion, through meditation—these people, who have fixed their mind on Me, I quickly redeem from this ocean of transmigratory existence beset with death.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

He who is unchanged by praise or blame, who is silent, content with whatever he has, firm of mind, and full of devotion—that man is dear to Me.

Extremely dear to Me are they who regard Me as the Supreme Goal, and endowed with faith and devotion, follow this nectar-like religion.

SELF-SURRENDER

Resigning mentally all actions to Me, regarding Me as the supreme goal, and resorting to yoga through the intellect, ever fix your mind on Me.

Fixing your mind on Me you will overcome all difficulties through My grace. But if from self-conceit you do not listen to Me, you will perish.

In the heart of all beings, O Arjuna, resides God, and by His maya causes them to revolve as if they were mounted on a machine.

Whoever offers Me a leaf, a flower, a fruit or water with devotion, I accept that devout gift of the pure-minded.

If even a very wicked man worships Me with single-minded devotion, he should be regarded as good, for he has made the right resolution.

Thus by surrendering yourself to Me through all your actions, and remembering Me constantly, you shall come to love Me. When you shall come to love Me, there will be nothing for you to achieve.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

THE WAY OF MEDITATION

In a clean spot fixing his seat firm, neither too high nor too low, made of Kusa grass, deer skin and cloth, one on top of another, he should practise meditation.

He should sit firm, holding his body, neck and head erect and still, and gaze steadily at the tip of his nose without looking around.

One should purify the passage of Prana by means of inhalation, retention and exhalation of the breath, and should also practise slowly in the inverse order, with the senses under control.

Raising the syllable Om to the heart by means of Pranayama, one should add to it the vowel. The Om is like the continuous peal of bell, and extending in a thin line like a thread in a lotus stalk.

Thus one should practise Pranayama coupled with Om, ten times, thrice daily, then within a month one will control the Prana.

The control of the mind is said to be the highest yoga; it is like the control of an unruly horse which must be made to obey its rider.

If the yogi, being deluded, makes mistakes in life, he should burn away his sins and impurities by prayer and meditation. This yoga of prayer and meditation is the only way of atonement.

When the mind well-controlled, remains fixed in the Atman, and one is freed from craving for all

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

enjoyments, then one is said to have attained yoga.

This yoga should be practised with perseverance, undisturbed by depression of heart.

Doubtless, O mighty Arjuna, the mind is restless and hard to control; but by practice and by detachment, it can be restrained.

A yogi, striving diligently, is purified of all sins, and, becoming perfect through many births, reaches the supreme goal.

And of all yogis, even he who, possessed of faith, worships Me with his mind absorbed in Me, is in my opinion the greatest.

The yoga of of Divine Glories.

I am the creater, sustainer and ruler of this universe, its father, mother and grandfather, the one worth knowing, the purifier, the sacred syllable OM, and the three Vedas-RK, Yajus and Sama.I am the hymn known as Gayatri.

Arjuna, I am the universal Self seated in the heart of all beings; so I alone am the beginning and middle and also the end of all beings.

I am Visnu among the twelve sons of Aditi, and the radiant sun among the luminaries; I am the glow of the Maruts (the forty-nine wind-gods), and the moon among the stars.

Among the Vedas, I am the Samaveda; among the

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

gods, I am Indra. Among the organs of perception etc., I am the mind; and I am the consciousness (life-energy) in living beings.

Among the eleven Rudras (gods of destruction), I am Siva; and among the Yaksas and Raksasas, I am the lord of riches (Kubera). Among the eight Vasus, I am the god of fire; and among the mountains, I am the Meru.

Among purifiers, I am the wind; among warriors, I am Sri Rama. Among fishes, I am the shark; and among streams, I am the Ganges.

Arjuna, I am the beginning and the middle and the end of all creations. Of sciences, I am the science of the soul, or metaphysics; in disputants, I am the right type of reasoning.

Arjuna, I am even that which is the seed of all life. For there is no creature, moving or inert, which exists without Me. Suffice it to say that I stand holding this entire universe by a fraction of My Yogic Power.

Divine Form.

Sanjay said: My lord! Having spoken thus, Sri Krsna, the supreme Master of Yoga, forthwith revealed to Arjuna His supremely glorious form .

Arjuna saw the supreme Deity possessing many mouths and eyes, presenting many a wonderful sight, decked with many divine ornaments, wielding many uplifted divine weapons, wearing divine garlands and

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

clothes, besmeared all over with divine sandal-pastes, full of all wonders, infinite and having faces on all sides.

If there be the effulgence of a thousand suns bursting forth all at once in the heavens, even that would hardly approach the splendour of the mighty Lord.

THREE GUNAS

There is no being on earth or in the middle region or even among the gods or anywhere else, which is free from these three Gunas born of Prakrti.

The Gunas—Sattva, Rajas and Tamas—which are born of Nature bind fast in the body the immortal embodied soul, O mighty Arjuna.

Of these, Sattva, on account of its stainlessness is luminous and free from evil; it binds, O sinless Arjuna, the embodied self by creating attachment to happiness and attachment to knowledge.

Know Rajas to be of the nature of passion, the source of desire and attachment;

Know further that Tamas is born of ignorance, and that it deludes all embodied beings. It binds fast, O descendant of Bharata, by inadvertence, indolence and sleep.

Sattva binds one to happiness, Rajas to work, while Tamas by covering knowledge, binds one to inadvertence.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

The result of virtuous actions is said to be pure, the result of Rajas is pain, while ignorance is the result of Tamas.

What are the marks, O Krishna, of the man who has risen above the three Gunas? What is his conduct? And how does he rise above the Gunas?

He who is same in honour and dishonour, same to friend and foe and who has renounced all undertakings—such a man is said to have risen above the Gunas.

And he who worships Me with the yoga of undeviating love, rises above the Gunas and becomes fit to be one with Brahman.

For, I am the embodiment of Brahman, the immortal and the immutable and of the eternal religion and absolute bliss.

The wise meditative man should worship me, without attachment to any things else, ever alert, and becoming master of his senses. He should conquer Rajas and Tamas by the culture of Sattva.

TRIPLE DIVISIONS

Food:

The food which is liked by all is threefold, as also sacrifice, austerity and charity. Hear about their distinction:

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

The food that augments life, energy, strength, health, happiness and joy, and which is savoury,, nourishing and agreeable, is liked by the Sattvikas.

The food that is excessively bitter, sour, saltish, hot pungent, dry and burning is liked by the people endowed with Rajas, and is productive of pain and, grief and disease.

And the food that is ill-cooked, tasteless, putrid, stale, unclean and left over, is favoured by people endowed with Tamas.

Sacrifice:

That sacrifice is Sattvika which is performed by men desiring no fruits, as enjoined by the scriptures, with their mind fixed on it, and for its own sake.

The sacrifice which is devoid of faith is of the nature of tamas.

Austerity:

Worship of gods, great ones, guru, and the wise, purity, straightforwardness, continence and non-injury, are said to be austerity of the body.

Words that do not give offence and that are truthful, pleasant, and beneficial, and also the regular recitation of the Vedas—these are said to be the austerity of speech.

Serenity of mind, gentleness, silence, self-control

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

and purity of heart—these constitute the austerity of the mind.

This threefold austerity practised with great faith by men who desire no fruit and are steadfast, is said to be Sattvika.

That austerity which is practised to gain respect, honour and adoration, and with ostentation, and which is transitory and unstable, is said to be Rajasika.

The austerity which is practised out of foolish notion, with self-torture or for the purpose of ruining another, is called Tamasika.

Charity:

That gift which is made to one who can make no return and with the feeling that it is one's duty to give and which is given at the right place and time and to a worthy person, is known to be Sattvika.

That gift, however, which is given with a view to receiving in return, or looking for its fruit, or grudgingly, is said to be Rajasika.

The gift that is given at the wrong place and time and to unworthy persons without regard and disdainfully, is said to be Tamasika.

Acts of sacrifice, gift and austerity must not be given up, but should be performed. For verily, sacrifice, gift and austerity purify the wise.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

Happiness:

The happiness which one relishes through practice, in which one comes to the end of all pain, and which is like poison at first but like nectar at the end, is declared to be Sattvika, born of the serenity of the understanding that concern itself with the Atman.

The happiness that arises from a contact between the objects and the senses, which is like nectar in the beginning, but like poison at the end, is said to be Rajasika.

That happiness which is self-delusive both at the beginning and at the end, and which arises from sleep, lassitude and inadvertence, is said to be Tamasika.

Faith in the Atman is Sattvika; faith in work is Rajasak and faith in dishonesty is Tamasak. But faith in service unto Me is beyond the Gunas.

'Om Tat Sat': this has been declared to be the triple designation of Brahman. By that were made of old, the holy ones, the Vedas and the Sacrifices.To sum up,

Endowed with an untarnished intellect and partaking of a light, Sattvika and regulated diet, living in a lonely and undefiled place, having rejected sound and other objects of sense, having controlled the mind, speech and body by restraining the mind and senses through firmness of a Sattvika type, taking resolute stand on dispassion, after having completely got rid of attraction and aversion and remaining ever devoted to the Yoga of meditation, having given up

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

egotism, violence, arrogance, lust, anger and luxuries, devoid of the feeling of meum and tranquil of heart,—such a man becomes qualified for oneness with Brahma. Who is Truth , Consciousness and Bliss.

Human beings are divided into four categories on the basis of their intrinsic qualities. The highest caste cosnsists of Brahmanas, the thinkers, philosophers, priests, whose role it is to provide spiritual guidance and intellectual sustenance to society. Next come the Ksatriyas, or warriors, whose *dharma* revolves around ruling the Nation and defending it against aggression. Third are the Vaisyas, or traders, who are involved in agricultural and commercial operations, while all that falls within the sphere of service is the responsibility of the fourth category of Sudras, or labourers.

SALUTARY ADVICE TO ARJUNA BY LORD KRISHNA

Arjuna, God abides in the heart of all creatures, causing them to revolve according to their Karma by His illusive power, seated as those beings are in the vehicle of the body.

Take shelter in Him alone with all your being, Arjuna. By His mere grace you shall attain supreme peace and eternal state.

Give your mind to Me, be devoted to Me, worship Me and bow to Me. Doing so you will come to Me alone, I truly promise you; for you are exceptionally dear to Me.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

Chapter 5

Path to an Eternal Blissful and Happy Life

You came alone empty handed and shall go alone empty handed. Those alone will be remembered who leave behind foot prints of noble deeds.

—Narinder Nath

I know of no more encouraging fact than the unquestionable ability of man to elevate his life by conscious endeavour.

—Henry David Thoreau

There are many questions about the mysteries of creation and of life, for which there are no conclusive answers. What is the purpose of life? The ultimate aim of all human endeavours is avoidance or elimination of sorrow and suffering as well as attainment of happiness and peace of mind. However,

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

history has nowhere recorded that mankind has been able to achieve these goals, in spite of trying out various ideologies, religions, customs, etc. Lord Buddha was deeply moved by the widespread poverty and privation he saw around, and proposed 'a righteous and virtuous life as a possible solution to avoid suffering. There is no denying the fact that each one of us have to leave this world at the appointed time and that is also a fixed period normally not exceeding 100 years To make the life valuable and meaningful, it has to be processed through various stages Spirituality is the bedrock of meaningful life and morality is the building block which builds the edifice of meaningful life.

Mr. Ralph Waldo Emerson writes interalia "to laugh often and love much; to win the respect of intelligent persons and the affection of children; to earn the approbation of honest critics; to appreciate beauty; to give of one's self; to leave the world a bit better, whether by a healthy child, a garden patch or a redeemed social condition; to have played and laughed with enthusiasm and sung with exultation; to know even one life has breathed easier because you have lived- that is to have succeeded."

Let us first analyse what is happiness? The American Declaration of Independence lists the pursuit of happiness, along with life and liberty as an "unalienable right", endowed by the Creator

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

Happiness comes from within. People whom we think should be happy, are generally not. Happiness seems unpredictable, inconsistent, even irrational. It is an emotion. It comes from living life with zest, pursuing your career, love, friendship, and hobbies with good values. Different People have different interpretations of what is happiness. The best solution to keep mental health problems at bay is stress elimination and having positive thinking. Here is how to keep your mind fresh and positive all the time. Have reality based expectations and lessen the gap between expectations and reality' Negative thinking should be changed to positive thinking. Develop high tolerance levels. Expectations about others should be reduced to minimum .Avoid loneliness. Religious and spiritual activities will help .Be active and enjoy the work you do. Minimise your needs and lead a contented life. Have satisfaction with what you have achieved but go on trying for better. Love and Affection are tonic to mind give and get them. When you meet with failures don't lose heart. Failures can be a step towards success. It is your choice . you can chose to brood and be angry or find the brighter side and be happy with what you have .You are at peace with yourself and the world when mind(intent), body(action) and spirit (conscience) vibrate in unison.

The happy man does not look back. He does not look ahead. He lives in the present. Money is not

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

everything but money is important. Beyond the basic needs, money helps us achieve our life's goals and supports the things we need for our family, education, health care, housing, charities, travel and enjoyment. The opportunity to make the most of our skills and talents, the ability to choose our own course in life, financial security. With money, much good can be done and much unnecessary suffering avoided or eliminated.

But, money has its own limitations too. How much do you need? What is it going to cost you to get it? If we have less that what we need, or if what we have is costing us too much we can never be happy. Mr.N. Ganeshan in his article on money 'X[1]- mentions that', Evidence of the psychological and spiritual poverty of the rich and famous fills our newspapers, magazines, tabloids, and television programmes and hardly needs repeating here. "We always think if we just had a little bit more money, we'd be happier," says Catherine Sanderson, a psychology professor at Amherst College, "but when we get there, we're not," "Once you get basic human needs met, a lot more money doesn't make a lot more happiness" "notes Dan Gilbert, a psychology professor at Harvard University and the author of the new book Stumbling on Happiness. we get a thrill at first from expensive things. But we soon get used to them, a state of running in place that economists call the 'hedonic treadmill'. The problem is not money,

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

it's us. Money can buy us some happiness, but only if we spend our money properly. Money should not cost us our soul, relationships, dignity, health, intelligence and joy in simple things of life.

Mrs. Geeta Padmanabhan writes in her article on happiness "[(2)]. Does money bring lasting happiness? The answer, however, begins with the theory known as the Easterlin paradox. In 1974, Richard Easterly, an economist, argued that economic growth didn't necessarily lead to personal satisfaction. As proof, he quoted the result of a poll done in post-World War II Japan. Between 1950 and 70, Japan saw unprecedented boom in economy. But the percentage of people who claimed life satisfaction fell during this period. The Japanese, it seemed were wealthier, but not happier. Once basic necessities were met, additional income didn't make you proportionately happier, Easterly said. Why not? Because your sense of joy doesn't always come from what you earn. Above the "necessities" mark, wealth sinks into a comparison pool. You own a Blackberry and now want a Blackberry Storm. With its vaguely spiritual undertones, this theory became an instant classic. Money can't buy happiness. But now, Easterlin's premise is being questioned.

Money does bring happiness, argue economists Betsey Stevenson and Justin Wolfe's. There may be no guarantees, but, in the 34 years since the Easterlin

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

paradox hit the world, public opinion surveys have shown "income does matter". They cite Gallup polls to confirm that life satisfaction is highest in the richest countries

But, affluence by itself doesn't guarantee a sense of well-being. . High incidence of heart disease and diabetes are results of affluence as much as they are of faulty living habits. Things that make us really happy, like short commutes, time with kids, an evening with life-long friends, a book that brings joy, have nothing to do with a fat wallet.

"We all want economic growth, but does absolute income ensure happiness? You can fulfil both short-term and long-term wishes, but lasting happiness comes from a balance between professional and personal life, From being surrounded by a loving family. Happiness goes beyond planning and achieving targets."

CONTENTMENT

Contentment Vasistha- sage wrote four thousand years ago that contentment is a gate-keeper to liberation. What is contentment? To renounce all craving for what is not obtained unsought and to be satisfied what comes unsought, without being elated or depressed even by them. The contented man who possesses nothing owns the world.

Satyakam vidyalankar an eminent Vedic scholar

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

writes in his book "wisdom of Vedas"[3] Do not cover any one's wealth. All that lives or moves on earth transient or permanent ,exists in the glory of god

enjoy that he bestows on you,

Set not your heart on what is possessed by others

The whole universe is an atom in the whole.

Desire is insatiable. Greed is also like that. Its thirst can not be quenched Emperor yayati in bhagvatam proclaimed an eternal truth

"Never can desire be quenched by repeated enjoyment of desires, like butter poured on Fire,with a view to quenching it , desire only gets inflamed thereby."[4]

sensual pleasures are as the camel eats thorny bushes as even though its mouth bleeds.

Here I would like to reproduce some excerpts from the book wisdom for the New Millennium by his holiness sri sri Ravi Shankar[5]. in the chapter six types of wealth and the four pillars of knowledge, he interalia writes that there are four major qualifications that one has to have in order to reach the self.

The first one is called viveka. Viveka is grossly translated as discrimination, but it is not just discrimination. Viveka is the understanding or observation that everything is changing.

Our own bodies are changing. Every cell in our body is changing.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

Our thoughts are changing and our emotions are changing.

The second pillar is called vairagya. Vairagya is also translated as "dispassion". Behind every misery there is a hope. The fuel for miserable people is hope. For example, if there is a deep desire of some joy in the future; perhaps if I change my job I'll be happier;

Foreseeing the happiness sometime in the future makes one miserable right now. The desire for some pleasure in the future, whether worldly or divine, causes one to miss the boat.

In business someone says, "When I become the manager of the company, I'll be happy." Managers think, "Oh I should become the director, then I'll be happy."

Every pleasure just leaves you where you are. It doesn't carry you anywhere. Pleasure only tires you.

Enjoying through the senses does not take you any further, the senses cannot elevate you to great heights of bliss. An attitude of, "So what! Let it be, whatever," takes away the feverishness in you and brings you to that pillar of dispassion.

Dispassion makes you very stable and solid on your path.

The third pillar includes the Six Wealths. They are: *shama, dama, uparati, titiksha, shraddha and samadhana.*

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

These six wealths together form the third pillar. The fourth pillar of knowledge is called mumukshatva. Mumukshatva is the desire for the highest, a desire for total freedom, for enlightenment, whatever you want to call it.

Mumukshatva is present when there is a deep desire for the highest, a burning desire, a longing in you for the Divine, a longing for infinity, for a bigger life. A longing a beloved, a longing in you to be part and parcel of the whole. These potentialities in you cannot be uncovered or woken up if you don't desire them. Unless someone wants to learn meditation, they cannot be taught by force.

When there is desire in someone to learn, it should come from within. Don't think that you have to attain this. Think you already have it. To some degree, to some extent, you have all the six wealths also. If you put a little more attention on them, they become stronger and more solid in you. The pillars are there. You only have to make them more solid, build them a little higher.

Another important point to note is that health is the greatest wealth. The life of a very happy and healthy but poor person is any day better than the life of a very rich but sad or sick person.

That is to maintain a healthy life, one should lead a sattvic, regulated, tension free life by regular Yoga, pranayma exercises, as taught by Swami Ramdevji

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

or in the art of living courses of Shri Shri Ravi Shankarji. Swmi Vivekananda the great teacher of meditation writes in his book I am a voice without form"[6] that The greatest help to spiritual life is MEDITATION." In meditation we divest ourselves of all material conditions and feel our divine nature. We do not depend upon any external help in meditation. The touch of the soul can paint the brightest colour even in the dingiest places; it can cast a fragrance over the vilest thing; it can make the wicked divine—and all enmity, all selfishness is effaced. The less the thought of the body, the better. For it is the body that drags us down. It is attachment, identification, which makes us miserable. That is the secret: To think that I am the spirit and not the body, and that the whole of this universe with all its relations, with all its good and all its evil, is but a series of paintings—scenes on a canvas—of which I am the witness". SWAMIJI has written extensively on meditation. Here are a few extracts from his complete works as published by Advaita. Ashram Calcutta. References indicated at the end of each selection are the references to complete volume'. volume is shown in roman numerals and page number in Arabic numerals.[7] These are also mentioned in MEDITATION and its methods by swami Vivekananda, edited by swami chetanananda published by advaita ashram, Kolkata.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

THREE STAGES OF MEDITATION

There are three stages in meditation. The first is what is called Dharana, concentrating the mind upon an object. I try to concentrate my mind upon this glass, excluding every other object from my mind except this glass. But the mind is wavering. When it has become strong and does not, waver so much, it is called Dhyana, meditation. And then there is a still higher state when the differentiation between the glass and myself is lost—Samadhi or absorption. The mind and the glass are identical. I do not see any difference. All the senses stop and all powers that have been working through other channels of other senses are focused in the mind. Then this glass is under the power of the mind entirely. This is to be realized. It is a tremendous play played by the Yogis. (IV.228)

HOW TO REST

Meditation means the mind is turned back upon itself. The mind stops all the thought-waves and the world stops. Your consciousness expands. Every time you meditate you will keep your growth. Work a little harder, more and more, and meditation comes. You do not feel the body or anything else. When you come out of it after the hour, you have had the most beautiful rest you ever had in your life.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

PRAY FOR ILLUMINATION

"I meditate on the glory of that being who created this universe; may He illuminate my mind.'

Sit and meditate on this ten or fifteen minute.

Keep your thoughts on virtue; what we think we tend to become.

Holy meditation helps to burn our all mental impurities. (VIII.39)

THE FOUR YOGAS

1 .Karma-Yoga: The manner in which a man realizes his own divinity through works and duty.

2 Bhakti-Yoga: The realization of the divinity through devotion to, and love of, a Personal God.

3 Raja-Yoga: the realization of the divinity through the control of mind.

4 Jnana-Yoga: The realization of a man's own divinity through knowledge.

These are all different roads leading to the same centre—God. (V.292)

EIGHT LIMBS OF YOGA

Raja-Yoga is known as the eightfold Yoga, because it is divided into eight principal parts. These are:

First: Yama. This is the most important and has to govern the whole life; it has five divisions:

1st. Not injuring any being by thought, word, or deed.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

2nd. Non-covetousness in thought, word, or deed.

3rd. Perfect chastity in thought, word, or deed.

4th.Perfect truthfulness in thought, word, or deed.

5th. Non-receiving of gifts.

Second: Niyama. The bodily care, bathing daily, dietary, etc.

Third: Asana, posture. Hips, shoulders, and head must be held straight, leaving the spine free.

Fourth: Pranayama, restraining the breath (in order to get control of the Prana or vital force).

Fifth: Pratyahara, turning the mind inward and restraining it from going outward revolving the matter in the mind in order to understand it.

Sixth: Dharana, concentration on one subject.

Seventh: Dhyana, meditation.

Eighth: Samadhi, illumination, the aim of all our efforts.

He who seeks to come to God through Raja-Yoga must be strong mentally, physically, morally, and spiritually. Take every step in that light. (VIII.41,44)Rr

Now let us understand what is moksha/ Emancipation.[8]

Emancipation is freedom from pain/ misery. The emancipated souls attain happiness and live in God. Obedience to the will of God, dissociation from sins, ignorance, and bad company, evil influences and bad

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

habits, the practice of truthfulness in speech, the promotion of public good, even handed justice, righteousness and the advancement of knowledge, worship of God – Glorification, Prayer and communion, the practice of yoga, the regulation of one's conduct in strict accordance with the 'dharma' and so on are the means of obtaining emancipation.

Those desiring emancipation must try to get emancipated during their present life itself. They should renounce all that is evil or sinful.

They should lead a virtuous life. They should realise that sin is the cause of pain and righteousness that of happiness. They should associate with man of great learning and piety and thereby studiously know truth from untruth, virtue from vice and right from wrong.

This subject is fully illustrated in[9] chaoter IX of Light of Truth by Swami Dayanand.it was recently published in quarterly patrika arya jyoti of Arya Samaj marathalli Bangalore,

Last of all, the Vedantist hold that salvation consists in the absorption of the soul into God.

One is remembered after his death either because of his good deeds or by notorious deeds. In order to understand the meaning , purpose and goal of human life, we need to study the teachings demonstrated by our saints and sages. People are afraid of death, death is one thing that everyone goes through. Death means

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

what? Dropping the past. Die every moment, and you are born every moment There is a story in our Upanishads. A boy 8 years old Natchiketa asks the Lord of death yama What is beyond death? I have explained this in detail in chapter 1 The last thought in our mind before we die come to us in the next life as the first impression. Our mind is energy and energy is indestructible. What happens to this mind when it leaves the body ?The mind is capsule in the many impressions stored there from the events in our life, and floats off like an invisible balloon and remains like that for a time until it again comes back into another body. Life is short . Every moment is precious –utilise it to devotion and prayer to God so that you can think of Him at the last moment..It is your choice. Hindu philosophy believes in theory of reincarnation. I have mentioned it in detail in chapter 1. Even in the Bhagvadgita it is mentioned under class 21 of chapter 9 that " Having enjoyed the extensive heaven-world, they return to this world of mortals on the stock of their merits being exhausted. Thus devoted to the ritual with interested motive recommended by the three Vedas (as the means of attaining heavenly bliss), and seeking worldly enjoyments, they repeatedly come and go (i.e., ascend to heaven by virtue of their merits and return to earth when their fruit has been enjoyed)".

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

HERE IS WHAT SRI SRI RAVI SHANKARJI SPOKE:

Meditation is seeing God in yourself.

Love is seeing God in the person next to you.

Knowledge is seeing God everywhere.

Expression of love is service.

Expression of joy is a smile.

Expression of peace is meditation.

Expressing God is conscious action. By sri Ravi Ravi Shankar.

[10]Swargashram(Heavenly Abode), Rishikesh, India. March 13, 1996

Prayer within breath Is silence

Love within infinity Is silence

Wisdom without words Is silence

Compassion without aim Is silence

Action without a doer Is silence

Smiling with all existence Is silence

[11]From the book Celebrating Silence by his hol. Sri sri Ravi Shankar ji

Closing the chapter, as Galieleo wrote "You cannot teach a man anything, you can only help him discover it within himself"[12] born to win.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

Chapter 6

Teachings of Our Sages, Saints, and Guiding Souls of Modern India

Our salutations go to all the past Prophets whose teachings and lives we have inherited, whatever might have been their race, colour,or creed!.Our Salutations go to all those God like men and women who are working to help humanity, whatever their birth, colour or race! Our salutations to those who are coming in the future- living Gods- to work unselfishly for our descendants. By Swami Vivekananda[1]

A Sage, guru, and a saint according to Hinduism Is one who has directly Experienced God in his life time VASISTHA, VYASA, BUDDHA,GURU NANAK lord Mahavira,swami Vivekananda, sri aurobindo, sri Ramakrishna, chaitanya mahaprabhu,Swami Dayanand, were some such sages/

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

saints.Many others like Tiruvalluvar, Tulsi Das, Valmiki,Tukaram,Eknath,Basaveshwara,Francis of ASSISI, Sankraacharya, Ramanujacharya, Jayadeva Goswami, and Kabir and many others were such saints.Here we shall deal with only a few selected one and that too briefly and in particular those about Whom i had the opportunity to read during my lifetime. . and are a great source of enlightenment.

1.VASISTHA A SAGE

Vasistha the oldest sage said to Rama , there are four gate-keepers at the entrance to the Realm of Freedom (Moksa).They are self-control, spirit of enquiry, contentment and good company. The wise seeker should diligently cultivate the friendship of these ,or at least one of them. O Rama. For ,not until the supreme being is realized will the dreadful miseries of birth and death come to an end. If this deadly serpent known as ignorant life is not overcome here and now , it gives rise to interminable suffering not only in this but in countless lifetimes to come. O Rama , if you thus overcome this sorrow of repetitive history (samsara) ,you will live here on earth itself like a God. For when delusion is gone and the truth is realized by means of enquiry into self-nature , when the mind is at peace and the heart is filled with the bliss of the God, this very world becomes an abode of bliss. Such a person has nothing to acquire, nor anything to shun.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

Such bliss is possible only by self-knowledge,not by any other means. Hence one should apply oneself constantly to self-knowledge –this alone is one's duty. He sees that pleasure and pain chase and cancel each other, and in that wisdom there is self-control and peace.

Self control : The eternal is not attained by rites and rituals, by pilgrimages nor by wealth; it is to be attained only by conquest of one's mind, by the cultivation of wisdom.

Enquiry: should be undertaken by an intelligence that has been purified by a close study of the scripture, and this enquiry should be unbroken By such enquiry the intelligence becomes keen and is able to realize the supreme. The wise man regards strength, intellect, efficiency, timely action and final liberation as the fruits of enquiry.

Contentment: is another gate-keeper to liberation. What is contentment? To renounce all craving for what is not obtained unsought and to be satisfied what comes unsought, without being elated or depressed even by them. The contented man who possesses nothing owns the world.

Satsanga: (company of the wise , holy and enlightened persons) is yet another gate-keeper to liberation. Satsanga enlarges one's intelligence, destroys one's ignorance and one's psychological distress. This is superior to all other forms of religious

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

practice like charity, pilgrimage and the performance of religious rites. O Rama, strive by all means to cultivate these noble qualities.

Extracts from: Vasistha's Yoga (Tr. by Swami Venkatesananda) from the book "SANT DARSHAN" published by Vivekananda Math, Hyderabad.

2 KIRISHNA DAVIPAYANA VYASA ON ART OF LIVING

Vyasa is a very old sage. He collected all the vedic truths and compiled them into four Vedas Rig –veda, sama-veda-yajur veda and Atharva-veda sometime 4000 years ago. He writes on ART OF LIVING as follows:- A wise man should learn good behaviour , good words and good acts from every side as, a gleaner collects grains of corn from the field .virtue is preserved by truthfulness; learning by application; beauty by cleansing the body; high lineage by good character. Mere lineage ; in the case of one whose behaviour is not good , cannot command respect. A man who does not grieve when a calamity overtakes him , who does his best all the while with his senses under perfect control, who bears misery with patience, is the foremost of men. One who bears no malice towards others but is kind to all, who does not talk arrogantly, who forgives a quarrel, is praised every where.

One's body is the chariot; the soul within is the driver; and the senses are its Horses. Drawn by those

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

excellent horses, when they are well trained, the wise man pleasantly goes through the journey of life in peace Well spoken words/speech is capable of doing so much good. ill spoken words are like arrows shot from the mouth which cannot be recalled back. Smitten by them man grieves day and night.

Vedas never rescue a deceitful man from sin. Gold is tested by fire; an honest man by his conduct, friends and foes are tested in times of calamity and danger. Sacrifice, study, ascetisim,gift,truth,forgiveness,mercy and contentment constitute the eight different paths of righteousness. Never quarrel with friends. Avoid anger and the company of vile and low. Never be arrogant and ignoble in conduct The man cast into the funeral pyre is followed by his own actions his merits and his sins. He goes empty handed

Extracts from Mahabharata

3. TIRUVALLUVAR AUTHOR OF TIRUKKURALTiruvalluvar

Is one of the most distinguished of Tamil saint poets. Tirukkural is regarded as the fifth Veda. A poet, philosopher, and a shrewd man of the world, Tiruvalluvar is known by many names; Navalar, a great scholar; Nayanar; a revered person,etc. Similarly his book of maxims is also called muppal since it epitomizes the three values: dharma, artha and Kama. Muppal means "trivarga"His date of birth may have

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

been as early as 200 BC. Some say he was the king of Kenya Kumari and renounced his kingdom some say he earned his living by weaving cloth and led an austere life . Tiruvalluvar discusses almost all aspects of life love, virtue, family, harmony, truth, wisdom, wife, love, fate etc.

The book contain couplets arranged in groups of 10 in 133 chapters. The book is one of wide counselling. Any number of these maxims can be quoted as representative of the remarkable wisdom of this sage. For example1 Four are the qualities of the true gentleman: a 'smiling face, a generous hand, a courteous disposition and kindly words 2" 'None can swim the great sea of births, but those who are united to the feet of GOD .3. That conduct is virtue which is free from these four things;. Malice,desire, anger, and bitter speech.

4. The excellence of the wife is the good of her husband; and good children are the jewels of that goodness5 Love begets desire; and the (desire)begets the immeasureable excellence of friendship 5 A favour conferred in the time of need, though it be small(in itself)is in value much larger than the world.

6 Self control will place "(man) among the Gods;the want of it will drive (him) into the thickest darkness(of hell) 7On patience;Let a man by patienceovercome those who through pride commit excesses'8 On fate; Although a man may study the most polished treatises,

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

the knowledge which fate has decreed to him will still prevail. 9 On learning. Learning is the true imperishable riches; all other things are not riches.10 On wisdom to live. As the world lives,this is wisdom. The wise are those who know before hand What will happen, those who do not do so are unwise.

4 VALMIKI the sage who wrote Ramayana

D H A RMA THE SOURCE OF HAPPINESS - All accumulations come to an end by depletion. Elevations end by crumbling and falling. Unions end by separation. Life ends by death. As ripe fruits inevitably fall to the ground, so much a man inevitably perish. The night it passes away , never returns. The Yamuna discharges her waters into the great ocean but never returns back into her course .Days and nights pass over the heads of all creatures on earth, and soon consume their lives as the sun "s rays dry up the water in summer. At sunrise men rejoice thinking they may work and earn. At sundown they rejoice also thinking they can enjoy themselves. But they do not realize that their lives are shrinking. As the seasons come round , men fancy they are ever fresh and feel happy.But with each cycle of the seasons our lives are shortened. As logs of wood come together on the wide ocean, and having drifted together for time, part from each other, so do wives, sons,kinsmen and possessions come together, and separate. This separation is

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

unavoidable.

No one on earth ever escapes the course of nature. So mourning for the dead cannot avail one when one's turn come.

5. BHUDDHA (560 TO 490 BC)

Lord Buddha was born as the son of Suddhodana and Mayadevi at Lumbini near Kapilavastu. He was named Siddhartha, that is, 'He who has accomplished his purpose.'

Suddhodana invited a rishi to see the royal child. On seeing the child the rishi prophesied, 'The supernatural signs indicate that the newborn child will bring deliverance to the whole world.' He, of course, warned the king that the boy might renounce the world any time if he should come across the diseased, the old and the dead. The king was very much alarmed to hear this. He got Siddhartha married at an early age and almost imprisoned him in a pleasure garden providing there in all kinds of enjoyments. The inevitable happened. One day Siddhartha, in the course of his visit to the city, came across an old man, a diseased person, a dead body, and at last a sannyasin. Siddhartha was very much perturbed and plunged into deep thought. Yasodhara, his wife, had given birth to a male child, Siddhartha thought, 'It is bondage heaped on bondage', and decided to renounce the world in search of truth. One night Siddhartha renounced

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

everything to fulfil the object of his advent and became a recluse. He came to Uruvilva (Buddha Gaya) and sat there beneath a Bo-tree, under a vow to attain enlightenment. After six years of hard questions the much desired enlightenment dawned upon him and he became Bodhisattva and started preaching the new gospel.

Buddha delivered his first sermon at Sarnath near Varanasi. Fulfilling the object of his advent by preaching his great message for full forty-five years and establishing his well-organized order of bhikshus (monks), he passed away at Kushinara at the age of eighty on a Vaisakha Purnima (full moon) day, which is known as the thrice-blessed day, as on this day he was born and also attained enlightenment.

He is not only the 'Light of Asia' but the 'Light of the World'. His contribution to the spiritual and cultural advancement of humanity is great beyond measure and his life and teachings have influenced the daily lives and aspirations of millions.

What did the Buddha preach? The Four Noble Truths:

1. There is sorrow and suffering (dukha) in the world.
2. The case of that sorrow and suffering is craving (tanha).
3. Tanha can be overcome.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

4. The way to overcome tanha and attain nirvana is to follow the Eightfold Path of Righteousness, that is to hold right beliefs and aspirations; to be right in speech and conduct; to have right means of livelihood and effort; to be right in mind and in meditation.

The goal of human endeavour, said the Buddha, should be to attain nirvana which is not annihilation but release. The Buddha rejected the authority of the Vedas and paths of knowledge (gyan-marga) and devotion (bhakti-marga), pre-sumably thus accepting the third alternative path, viz., of action (karma-marga) The Buddha's was a practical faith. To his son Rahul, the Buddha gave the golden rule of conduct; "When there is a deed you wish to do, then think thus: is it conducive to my own harm or to the harm of others or both? Then it is bad." And he advised his disciples: "Inculcate love (metta), endure insults of those that insult you, do not resist, for hatred does not cease by hatred, but hatred ceases by love."

In the parting message to his disciples he exhorted self-reliance. "Be ye lamps unto yourselves... be ye a refuge unto yourselves. Betake yourselves no external refuge. Hold fast to the truth... "In the Dhammapada, the ultimate message is summed up thus:

By ourselves is evil done, by ourselves we pain endure; By ourselves we cease from wrong, by ourselves become we pure. No one saves us but

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

ourselves, no one can and no one may; We ourselves must tread the path, Buddhas only show the way.

6.THIRTHANKAR MAHAVIR (599 BC–527BC)

Lord Mahavir was the twenty-fourth Tirthankara or prophet of the Jain religion. Vardhamana Mahavir was born in 599 BC to Siddhartha and Priyakarini (Trishala) the king and queen of a Lichchavi principality in North India. Mahavir was strong both physically and mentally. He was firm and fearless. He was deeply religious and spiritual and desired to lead a life of recluse and renunciation. But on the pressure of his parents he married Yasoda and had a daughter Priyadarsana. But his inner urge for renunciation in search of Supreme Truth forced him to give up this family bond at the age of thirty. He at once broke the ties and started moving like a wandering monk.

Mahavir led a life of ascetic for twelve years spending long periods in silence and meditation with no awareness of his own body. Finally under a Sala tree on the banks of the Rijupalika, Mahavir attained the Supreme Knowledge called Kevala and became a Jina The Conqueror. He decided to propagate the great truth that he found. He travelled far and wide and preached simple truths in simple language in simple manner. He addressed large gatherings, cleared doubts, solved problems and enlightened all on the process of attaining Salvation through Right Vision,

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

Right Knowledge and Right Character. He organised a great order of monks to carry on his message and philosophy. Kings, princes, scholars and aspirants became his followers and Jainism became a great religious order. Leaving a great legacy that is continued even today with large numbers of Sadhus and house holders following Jainism, Mahavir attained Nirvana in 527 BC at the age of seventy two. According to him everything, animate or inanimate, has jiva,Plants,water,all have life.

Mahavir taught the five Vratas (vows) of Ahimsa (Non-violence), Asteya (Non-stealing), Asatya Tyaga (Truth), Aparigraha (Minimum Need) and Brahmacharya (Celibacy) for liberation from the painful worldly bonds to attain Salvation. He preached that all are potentially capable of attaining salvation, without any consideration of caste, creed or gender.
Life Sketch by: Sri A.S. Murty

7. SRI SANKARCHARYA (788 - 820 AD)

Adi Sankara was born to a pious Brahmin couple Sivaguru and Aryaamba in the year 788 AD in a village named Kaladi in Kerala. He exhibited extraordinary intelligence from childhood and mastered all branches of traditional learning by sixteen. He was initiated into Sannyasa by Sri Govindapada Acharya at Badrinath. At his guru's bidding he travelled the length and breadth of the

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

country and brought to light the ancient Vedic Dharma that had been overshadowed for some centuries under the influence of degenerated Buddhism. At Kashi he vanquished many a great scholar and philosopher in hair splitting philosophical debates and arguments and established the supremacy of Advaita Vedanta. He had to defeat propounders of near about 72 schools of philosophy before establishing the superiority of Vedic Dharma. He is considered to be the greatest exponent of theory of Monism of Advaita Vedanta. Sri Sankara organized all sannyasins into ten sampradays known as 'Dasanamis'. He established four Maths in the four corners of Aryavarta viz,. Joshimath in the North, Puri in the East, Dwaraka in the West and Sringeri in the South and made his four disciples in-charge of them respectively. Towards the end of his life Sri Sankara proceeded to Kashmir to the temple of Mother Sharada. From here he is said to have travelled to Nepal and thence to Kedarnath where he is believed to have gone into a cave and disappeared. The philosopher par excellence was just 32 when he left this world in 820 AD.

Sankara's commentaries on the Prasthanatraya viz,. The Brahma Sutras, the Upanishads and the Gita are the most popular among all the commentaries that have ever been written on these basic texts of Sanatana Dharma. Sankara had written many

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

original Vedantic texts elucidating the Advaita Philosophy in a lucid way.

Philosophy:

According to Sankara the ultimate reality has no name and form. The objective world has no independent existence. Only Brahman exists. The nature of Brahman or Atman or Soul is Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute. On account of Maya or ignorance the one indivisible Self appears to be finite and limited. When ignorance is destroyed the Self shines in its own resplendent glory. Brahman alone is real, this world is unreal: the Jive is no other than Brahman. Neither by Yoga, nor Sankhya, not by work, not by learning, but by the realization of one's identity with Brahman is liberation possible, and by no other means

The first step to liberation is extreme aversion to al perishable things; then follow calmness, self-control, forbearance and the utter relinquishment of all work enjoined in the scriptures.

While a man's soul lives in his body, fondly his family ask about his well-being. But when the life-breath leaves its dwelling, even his wife flees in fear. So, worship only Govinda, the Lord.

He who yields to lust for (momentary) pleasure, leaves his body a prey to disease. Yet, though death is the only final ending, none forswears his sinfulness.

O fool! Abandon the desire for amassing wealth;

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

cultivate good thoughts in your mind. Devote your mind to righteousness and let dispassion be your law. Content your mind with what you earn through the deeds performed by your previous Karma. Be not attached to friend or foe, to son or kinsman, to peace or war. If you aspire for Vishnu's realm, look upon all things as of equal worth.

Control the Self, restrain the breath, sift out the transient from the True. Repeat the holy name of the Lord and still the restless mind within.

8. GURUNANAK (1469-1539)

Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikh religion, was born on 15 April 1469 in a humble cottage at Talwandi in the district of Lahore (now in Pakistan).

In those days India was ruled by the Pathans. The condition of the people, , especially in respect of religion, was far from satisfactory. Undue importance was given to rituals and very few cared for real spiritual life. It was at this juncture that the great guru was born.

From his childhood, Nanak was of a spiritual temperament and was born to fulfil a divine purpose.

A few years later, he started his mission of spreading a new gospel to propagate divine love. He was opposed by the Emperor, scholars, and mullahs. But his spirituality, devotion and honesty of purpose soon silenced everybody. His critics were convinced of the

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

sincerity of his purpose and became his followers. Nanak travelled extensively throughout the length and breadth of India and went abroad and visited Mecca, Medina, Persia, Kabul etc. Wherever he went, he spread his catholic and universal message which was accepted with great regard by Hindus and Muslims alike. Nanak's message is evident in the first statement he made after his enlightenment: "There is no Hindu, not any Mussalman." He thus declared the universal message of the brotherhood of human beings and the fatherhood of God. Nanak also emphasized the power of the Lord's name: "His nam is the substance, of which all life is made. His name enlarges the heart, and makes it limitless." He also spoke vehemently against caste, ritualism and idolatry. Religion consists not in the smearing of ashes, chanting of hymns or in bathing in holy places. Religion consists in being pure of mind in the midst of encircling impurities of the world. Recall the wandering mind from distraction of the senses and then employ in the pious discourses and in devoutly singing and listening to the songs in praise of the Lord. He accepted the theory of Karma and transmigration of souls. The path he advocated was of Bhakti emphasising the worship of the name of God (Nam-marga)rejected asceticism and advocated the necessity of taking on a guru and keeping company with holy men (sadh sangat). He laid emphasis on community

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

hymn singing (Kirtan), community kitchen (langar).

God is one, God is love, God is unity. The same God resides in the temple and in the mosque and outside as well. All human beings are equal in the eyes of God. Devotion to God and service to mankind irrespective of caste, creed or colour are the duty of every one.

He was regarded as a Sadguru or true spiritual teacher by the age of forty and his disciples came to be known as Sikhs.

He taught through verses that came to him from heaven through divine inspiration and communion with God. The collection of most of these teachings is called Japji Sahib and the famous Guru Granth Sahib also embodies them. They are literally worshipped by all Sikhs with devotion and sincerity.

Guru Nanak was loved and adored both by the Hindus and the Muslims. After his demise in 1539, both people claimed to dispose his body according to their respective customs. But when the shroud was removed next morning, there was only a heap of choicest flowers instead of the guru's body.

9. SWAMI DAYANANDA SRASWATI (1824 A.D 1883)

Swami Dayananda was born in Tankara in Gujarat in 1824 A.D. his exact date of birth is unknown. He dropped his mortal coil on 30th Oct1883 at Ajmer.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

Dayananda was in the boyhood called Mulashankara. The young boy was asked by his father on the Sivarathri day to fast and keep awake the whole day and night looking at the stone idol of Lord Shiva to have Sivadarshan. The boy believed and went on gazing at the Sivalinga. In the midnight, instead of Siva coming out of the linga, there came out, from behind the idol a mouse to run about on the stone image and to eat the edible offering in front of the deity. This trifling incident of a common occurrence triggered off a turning point in the boy's life towards Truth. He broke the fast and gave up the traditional faith. He pitied the credulous elders and began to search for truth, to unravel the mystery of life and death faith and worship, religion and tradition, customs and culture etc.

The questioning mind of Mulashankara never spared anybody. Tirelessly he asked everybody for guidance. During his period of quest for truth he had diverse experiences. In the people of renunciation, he found greed; in the places of service, he discovered commerce; in the citadels of sincerity, he saw fraud. And everywhere he found the masses to be credulous and superstitious. Unable to know the meaning of life and purpose of life, unable to put up with the polarities in life and nature, he even thought of ending his life.

Neither religious practices, nor scriptural texts, nor even the people of wisdom could quench his thirst for

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

Truth. Sanyasa, too was unable to bless him with the dawn of knowledge. It was in 1860, he heard about a blind sadhu who could show him the light of knowledge. The sadhu was no other than Swami Virajananda of Mathura. The seeker at last was blessed with a master, who could light the lamp of wisdom.

Now it was the mission of Swami Dayananda to resuscitate the Vedic religion. But it was herculean task. Both the priests and the pundits would rise against him. Idolatory cannot be dispensed with so easily. He therefore, should first convince the scholars of Benaras, if he wanted to propagate his discoveries. He visited Kasi again and again throwing out an open challenge. But there was none to accept it. Later on, he went round the country holding discussions with all the erudite pundits of all religions that he came across. Finally, he founded Arya Samaj in 1875and wrote his powerful book SATYARTH PRAKASH (Light of Truth) propounding the new philosophy based on the Vedas.From 1875 till 30th Oct 1883 when he dropped his body, he tirelessly engaged himself in spreading and strengthening the great Arya Samaj.

Teachings from Light of Truth (Satyartha Prakash):
Q.-Is there any kind of *Tirtha* or any mode of taking the name (of the Lord) which is desirable?

A.- Yes, there is. The study and teaching of the *Veda and the Shastras,* association with righteous men of learning, promotion of public good, righteous living,

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

the practice of *yoga,* freedom from malice and hypocrisy, truthfulness in word, deed and thought, the practice of *Brahmacharya*, the service of one's father, mother, tutor and the learned guests, worship of God, mental tranquility, control of the senses, gentleness, activity acquisition of knowledge, both material and spiritual, and of other good qualities, and the performance of such other good works are all *Tirthas,* as they help one to cross the ocean of misery and sorrow. Land and water can never be called *Tirthas,* since that which helps one to swim across (an ocean of) misery and sorrow alone constitutes a *Tirtha.* No sin can ever be destroyed by taking the name of *Hari, Rama, Krishna, Narayan, Shiva, Bhagavati,* otherwise none in the whole world should suffer or be afraid of sinning.

Shri Aurobindo Ghose Writes about him as remarkable figure that will appear to the eye of posterity at the head of the Indian Renaissance, one unique in his type as he is unique in his work, A bold and rugged victor of difficulties, which matter presents to spirit. He brings back an old Aryan element in to the national character. He said, Be a thinker, but be also a doer; be a soul, but be also a man; be a servant of God, but be also a master of Nature!" For this was what he himself was: a man with God in his soul, vision in his eyes and power in his hands to hew out of life an image according to his vision. Dayananda looked

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

beyond and perceived that our true original seed was the Veda. He had the national instinct and he was able to make it luminious-an institution in place of an instinct.

Truth seems a simple thing and is yet most difficult. Truth was the masterword of the Vedic teaching, truth in the soul, truth in the vision, truth in the intention, truth in the act. Practical truth Aryavat an inner candour and a strong sincerity, clearness and open honour in the word and deed, was the temperament of the old Aryan morals.

The basic ten Principles of Aryasamaj are mentioned in Liht of Truth.

10. Sri Ramakrishna (1836-1886)

Born in a poor Brahmana family in Hooghly district, West Bengal, Gadadhar Chatterjee began showing unusual signs of religious ecstasy at a very early age. When he was nineteen, he came to Calcutta to live with his elder brother who had been appointed priest of a newly built temple at Dakshineshwar on the banks of the river Ganges. The main shrine is dedicated to the great goddess. Kali, from which Calcutta derives its name, and it was as a devotee of the goddess that Sri Ramakrishna, as he came to be called, began his astounding career of spiritual discipline and attainments. Vision, trances and ecstasies crowded in upon him, and most of his time was spent in intense

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

spiritual rhapsodies. His agonied craving to see the Divine face to face was fulfilled, and he then proceeded under various spiritual guides to experience the whole gamut of mystical relationships described in the Hindu scriptures, ranging from intense emotional raptures to the supreme beatitude of the *nirvikalpa Samadhi*-contact with the all pervasive, fromless Brahman which is the highest goal of Vedanta.

Gradually, the fame of this unlettered young priest began to spread far and wide throughout Bengal. The villager and the city dweller, the scholar and the poet, the educated and the illiterate people from all walks of life began finding their way to Dakshineshwar.

To all who came Sri Ramakrishna gave the same message. He exhorted them not to waste their time squabbling over this or that creed or religion, but to seek God with a pure and dedicated heart. He reaffirmed on the basis of his own spiritual experiences that all creeds and religions led ultimately to the same goal.

Sri Ramakrishna was, indeed, an apostle of divine realization, one of those rare souls whose coming heralds a spiritual revolution.

From all these experiences Sri Ramakrishna came to the following conclusions regarding Reality and religious life.

- God Realization is the ultimate goal of human life because that alone can bring man supreme

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

happiness and peace.

- God is one, Personal as well as Impersonal, and is known by different names in different religions.
- God can be realized through various paths taught in world religions.
- All religions are true in so far as they lead to the realization of the Ultimate Truth.
- Purity of mind is basic condition for the realization of God, but divine grace can redeem even the worst sinner.
- With this faith in God one should cultivate a positive outlook on life instead of yielding to self-condemnation or depression.
- God dwells in all people as the Supreme Self; hence all people are to be treated with respect.

11. SHIRDI SAI BABA (1838-1918)

Sri Sai Baba of Shirdi is a great saint, considered to be a Perfect Master. Nothing definite is known about his early life before his appearance at Shirdi in 1854. It is believed that he was born in Maharashtra in 1838 and lived with his guru Venkusha from 1842 to 1854 that his parents had been Brahmins belonging to a village called Pathri. His family was deeply spiritual. He was given away to a Sufi fakir in his childhood and this holy man brought him up. This fakir was the venerated guru of Baba.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

Baba lived for about 60 years in a dilapidated mosque which he named Dwarakamayee in Shirdi. Both Hindus and Muslims alike respected him. Baba always preferred the company of his followers and did not accept anything for his personal comfort or luxury. He slept on a torn rag and used a brick as pillow. He mended his own clothes. When rich devotees brought him delicious food on silver plates, Baba distributed everything amongst the poor. He received huge sums of money as dakshina every day but by the end of the day he was again penniless because he never kept a single coin for himself.

Sai Baba's life is a series of miracles. In 1886 he is believed to have left his body for three days and then returned to it. The lifestyle of Sai Baba and his daily routine show that he had deep compassion for the redemption of human beings and all his miracles served this single purpose. His approach to spirituality was universal and humanitarian. He often gave herbal medicines to suffering people. He kept a fire burning, the ash of which had curative properties. This fire burns in Shirdi even today. There are thousands of temples dedicated to Sai Baba all over India as well as numerous books and journals about him.

Baba gave an indication of his passing away in 1916 and left his mortal frame on the Vijayadashami day of 1918.

Teachings: "For self-realization, constant

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

meditation is essential. Meditation makes the mind tranquil. The quintessence of meditation is to fix the mind on the Lord. When the meditation assumes objective realization, the individual identities of the Sadhaka (meditator), the Sadhana (mediration) and the Lord (the Meditated) get integrated into one single identity of a single divine experience of divine consciousness."

God is One in whatever form you worship Him (Sab Ka Malik Eka Hai).

A true Guru is very rare. It is not enough if you just offer pranams to Guru. You must dedicate your heart and soul to him. The Guru dispels the ignorance of the disciple through the instrument of his teachings.

Instead of looking at the external beauty of the worldly attractions look at the beauty on the divine manifestations.

Sraddha (commitment with devotion) and Saburi (patience with faith) are the two feet on which you should move to reach your goal. *Life Sketch by:* Dr. Sumita Roy

12. SWAMI VIVEKA NANDA (1863-1902)

Narendra Nath Datta, as Swami Vivekananda was known in his premonastic days, was born on 12 January 1863 in a well-to-do family in Kolkata. His parents were Viswanath Datta, an attorney and Bhuvaneswari Devi. In his boyhood Naren was

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

endowed with strong physique, brilliant intellect and mystic temperament. After graduating in mathematics, history and philosophy, he studied law. At the age of 18 while studying in the college he met Sri Ramakrishna.

Under the loving guidance of his Master, he blossomed into a spiritual luminary. After Sri Ramakrishna's passing away, fourteen of the Master's young disciples (two more joined later), under the leadership of Swami Vivekananda, formed a monastic brotherhood known as the Ramakrishna Math (Order).

After staying in this monastery for two years, Swami Vivekananda spent a few years travelling all over India as a mendicant monk. During these travels he was deeply moved to see the appalling poverty, the people still clung to religion, and the ancient spiritual culture was living force in their lives. The people therefore, needed a message of strength that would infuse faith in themselves. Vivekananda found this message in Vedanta. Thus Swamiji saw that in order to uplift the masses it was necessary to spread both secular and spiritual education among them. And for this what was needed most was an organization, ' a machinery which will bring noblest ideas to the doorstep of even the poorest and the meanest'.

During his travel in India Swami Vivekananda heard about the plans to hold a World Parliament of

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

Religions in Chicago. He felt that the Parliament would provide the right forum to present his Master's message to the world, and so he decided to go to America. Another reason which prompted Swami Vivekananda to go to America was to seek financial help for his project of uplifting the masses. His speeches at the World Parliament of Religions held in Chicago in September 1893 made him world famous. A Powerful speaker with a sonorous voice and a fine command of English, Vivekananda's famous address on the first day of the Parliament created a sensation, and his subsequent speeches established him as an outstanding preacher. In the West Swamiji found the people there had solved their socio-economic problems to a great extent and were seeking the ultimate truth and the ultimate meaning of life. Swamiji believed that Vedanta would fulfil their higher needs.

Further, Swamiji had developed the insight that Sri Ramakrishna was the embodiment of the eternal truths of Vedanta, that the Master's life was the fulfilment of all the promises of the supreme Vedantic vision of Reality and, as Romain Rolland expressed it some years later, Sri Ramakrishna 'was the consummation of two thousand years of the spiritual life of three hundred million people'.

After spreading Vedanta in the West for nearly three and a half years, Swami Vivekananda returned to India in January 1897. In response to the

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

enthusiastic welcome that he received everywhere, he delivered a series of lectures in different parts of India. He stressed the primacy of spiritual life, preached a doctrine of inner strength and spiritual power which alone could free India from her material, intellectual and spiritual bondage, and stressed the essential unity of all religions. Through these lectures Swamiji attempted to do the following:

- To rouse religious consciousness of the people and create in them pride in their cultural heritage;
- To bring about unification of Hinduism by pointing out its common bases;
- To focus the attention of educated people to the plight of the downtrodden masses, and expound his plan for their upliftment by the application of Vedanta in practical life.

In Kolkata, Swamiji convened a meeting of the disciples and devotees of Sri Ramakrishna on 1 May 1897 and inaugurated a new organization bearing the name Ramakrishna Mission. He intended it to be a unique organization in which monks and lay people cooperated in providing educational, medical and other forms of social service especially to the poor and the disadvantaged.

After setting in motion a machinery for the propagation and practical application the life-giving principles of Vedanta lived and taught by Sri

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda left the mortal world on 4 July 1902 at the age of thirty-nine and a half years.

Swamiji has written several books. one can read his complete works as available from Advaita Ashram, 5 DELHI Entally Road, Kolkata. Viveknanda institute of human excellence Ramakrishna Math, Hyderabad, has published a beautiful book . "i am voice without a Form,"

Swami Vivekananda called for arousing sleeping soul to self-conscious activity. It is indeed evolution of righteousness in the mind leading to actions of removing the pain and sufferings.

13. AUROBINDO (1872-1950)

Sri Aurobindo was a great sage who believed that spirituality is the awakening of the inner reality of our being. He was born in Kolkata on 15th August 1872. His father believed that no child could be well brought up in India. So at the age of seven he was sent to England where he spent the next fourteen years of his life, He studied first at St. Paul's School and later at King's College, Cambridge. He passed the Indian Civil Service Examination in 1890. But he was reluctant to join this service and failed in the riding exam by his own choice.

After his return to India in 1893, Sri Aurobindo spent the next thirteen years in the Baroda State

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

Service. He was both an administrator and a professor. It was at this time that he acquainted himself with Indian culture which was totally new to him due to his long exile. He also got deeply involved in the political situation of the country fighting for its freedom from the colonizer. He learnt many Indian languages including Sanskrit. In 1906 he went back to Bengal and joined the struggle for independence. He brought out a newspaper with revolutionary ideas called Bande Mataram. Soon he was imprisoned for his anti-government activities and was kept in Alipur jail for a year. This was the turning point in the life of the sage. Here he practised Yoga and has some powerful spiritual experiences.

In 1910 Sri Aurobindo's inner call took him away from active politics. He retired to Pondicherry where he set up the Aurobindo Ashrama. He started the monthly philosophical journal called Arya in which his major works were serialized. His works are based on the inner knowledge which he gained through his spiritual experiences. He wrote great classics such as The Life Divine, Synthesis of Yoga and the famous epic Savitri.

In the course of his four decades at Pondicherry, Sri Aurobindo developed one of the most comprehensive and original systems of thought in modern times. He based himself upon the Hindu tradition, but gave creative interpretations to the

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

ancient texts including the Vedas and the Upanisads. His masterly work, *Essays on the Gita*, is perhaps the most outstanding of the many commentaries that have been written upon this sacred text since Sankaracarya, while his chief literary work, The Life Divine, the massive epic poem, Savitri, and numerous other works stand as a testimony to his gigantic intellect and deep intuition.

If his political philosophy can be called spiritual nationalism, Sri Aurobindo's general philosophy can well be called spiritual evolution. He rejects the traditional Hindu concept of individual salvation and stresses those aspects of the Hindu tradition that speak of raising the collective consciousness of the race. The key concept in his thought is that of spiritual evolution.

During his stay at the Ashrama, Sri Aurobindo took up the task of formulating a complete method of Yoga which would transform human life into a divine one. He believed that the present state of evolution is mind-based and the next one will be beyond the mind or Supramental. He devoted the rest of his life to this monumental task. In it he was aided by the Mother, a French lady, called Mirra.

Sri Aurobindo departed from this world on 5th December 1950.

Teachings: The first thing to do in the sadhana is to get a settled peace and silence in the mind. Otherwise

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

you may have experiences, but nothing will be permanent. It is in the silent mind that the true consciousness can be built.

The inner spiritual progress does not depend on outer conditions so much as in the way we react to them from within-that has always been the ultimate verdict of spiritual experience.

To recognise one's weaknesses and false movements and draw back from them is the way towards liberation.

Life Sketch by: Dr. Sumita Roy

14. PARAMAHAMSA YOGANANDA (1893-1952)

Paramahamsa Yogananda (Mukundalal Ghosh) was born on January 5, 1893,in Gorakhpur, India. His father was Sri Bhagabati C Ghosh, a wealthy executive at the Bengal Nagpur Railway.Mukundalal was a graduate from Calcutta University. He was not much interested in academic studies. From very childhood he had but one desire-God realization. His search for God led him to his Guru Swami Sri Yukteswar Maharaj. In 1915 he was initiated into Sannyasa order. In 1920 Swami Yogananda began his mission in the West, spreading the message of ancient yoga techniques for self-realilzation. Apart from America, he travelled in England, Scotland, Europe, Palestine and India inspiring thousands of people with his speeches.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

Self-realization Fellowship (SRF) Centres were established in many big cities around the world. In 1925 an international headquarters was founded on Mount Washington Estates in Los Angeles to carry on the work of disseminating throughout the world, the teachings of Self-Realization Fellowship (Yogada Satsanga Society).

Paramahamsa Yogananda had a versatile and facile pen, and has to his credit a number of publications. Chief amongst them are: The Science of Religion, Metaphysical Meditations, Cosmic Chorus, Whispers from Eternity, Journey to Self-realization and Autobiography of a Yogi.

In India, the same teachings are disseminated from yogada Math the head quarters of Yogda Satsang Society of India in Kolkota.The ideal of love for God and service to humanity found full expression in the life of Paramahamsa Yogananda. He came to earth for the purpose of uniting East and West spiritually and to awaken divine yearnings in the hearts of spiritual seekers. This illustrious son of Mother India left his mortal body on March 7,1952. His prayer, the one he quoted most often is:'May Thy love shine forever on the sanctuary of my devotion, and may I be able to awaken Thy love in all hearts'. Life Sketch by: Swami Srikantananda .

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

15. A.C. BHAKTIVEDANTA SWAMI PRABHUPADA (1896-1977)

FOUNDER OF ISKCON: (International Society for Krishna consciousness)

His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada appeared in this world in 1896-in Calcutta, India. He first met his spiritual master, Srila Bhaktusiddhanta Sarasvati Gosvami, in Calcutta in 1922. Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati, a prominent religious scholar and the founder of the Gaudiya Mathas (Vedic institutes), liked this educated young man and convinced him to dedicate his life to teaching Vedic knowledge, Srila Prabhupada became his student and, in 1933, his formally initiated disciple.

At their first meeting, in 1922, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati requested Srila Prabhupada to broadcast Vedic knowledge in English. In the years that followed, Srila Prabhupada wrote a commentary on the Bhagavad-gita, assisted the Gaudiya Matha in its work and, in 1944, started. Back to Godhead, an English fortnightly magazine. Single-handedly.

In 1950 Srila Prabhupada retired from married life, adopting the vanaprastha (retired) order to devote more time to his studies and writing. He travelled to the holy city of Vrndavana, where he lived in humble circumstances in the historic temple of Radha-Damodara. There he engaged for several years in deep

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

study and writing. He accepted the renounced order of life (sannyasa) in 1959. At Radha-Damodara, Srila Prabhupada began work on his life's masterpiece: a multivolume commentated translation of the eighteen-thousand verse Srimad-Bhagavatam (Bhagavata Purana). He also wrote Easy Journey to Other Planets.

After publishing three volumes of the Bhagavatam, Srila Prabhupada went to the United States, in September 1965, to fulfil the mission of his spiritual master. Subsequently, His Divine Grace wrote more than fifty volumes of authoritative commentated translations and summary studies of the philosophical and religious classics of India.

When he first arrived by freighter in New York City, Srila Prabhupada was practically penniless. Only after almost a year of great difficulty did he establish the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, in July of 1966. Before he passed away on November 14, 1977, he had guided the Society and seen it grow to a worldwide confederation of more than one hundred *asramas*, schools, temples, institutes and farm communities.

Srila Prabhupada also inspired the construction of several large international cultural centers in India. The center at Sridhama Mayapur is the site for a planned spiritual city, an ambitious project for which construction will extend over many years to come. In

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

Vrndavan are the magnificent Krsna-Blarama temple and International Guesthouse, gurukula school, and the Srila Prabhupada Memorial and Museum. There are also a major cultural and educational centers in Mumbai and New Delhi. Other centers are planned in a dozen important locations on the Indian subcontinent.

His writings have been translated into over eighty languages. The Bhaktivedanta Book Trust, established in 1972 to publish the works of His Divine Grace, has thus become the world's largest publisher of books in the field of Indian religion and philosophy.

In just twelve years, from his arrival in America in 1965 till his passing away in Vrndavana in 1977, despite his advanced age Srila Prabhupada circled the globe fourteen times on lecture tours that took him to six continents. Notwithstanding such a vigorous schedule, Srila Prabhupada continued to write prolifically. His writings constitute a veritable library of Vedic philosophy, religion, literature and culture.

16. ACHARYA RAJNEESH-OSHO(1933-1999)

Acharya Rajneesh popularly known as Osho to his followers was one of the most controversial, but very interesting gurus of modern India.Born on December 11, 1933 at in kuchwada in Madhyapradesh in a jain business family. He received enlightenment at the age 21 in 1953. In 1957, a year after he completed his

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

masters degree in philosophy, he became a prof. Of philosophy at a Sanskrit college in Raipur and later as a professor at Jabalpur university. In 1966 he left that teaching profession and began delivering lectures before large gatherings of people and conducting meditation camps. In 1969, he moved to Mumbai and then settled in his famous centre at pune . The new ashram remained a centre of intense spiritual activity for the next 7 years during which he delivered daily courses and attracted thousands of followers from various parts of the world. In 1981 he shifted his residence to a ranch at Gregon in USA . The activities of some of his followers brought him into conflict with the local Govt . In 1985, he was forced to leave the ranch and the country. From 1987 he spent the rest of his life at Pune. He passed away in 1999. He was one of the most gifted speakers but the most misunderstood of spiritual leaders of our times.

17. MAHARISHI MAHESH YOGI(1917-2008)

He was the leader or guru of a new religious movement called Transcendental movement notable in influencing the beatles and other celebrities of the Betales for which reason he is also known as a betale guru. His original name was Mahesh Prasad Varma. He became a disciple of Swami Brahamananda Saraswati, who was the Shankaracharya of Jyoti Math located in the Himalayas from 1941 to 1953.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

Beginning in 1955, he began to introduce the techniques and other programs to the world. His message of unity, peace, and love for all humanity has been acclaimed by enlightened leaders around the globe. Recognizing the transcendent oneness at the heart of all religions, he emphasizes prayer and meditation as the true building blocks for achieving peace.The achievements of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi are profound in the field of knowledge and immense in the field of action. During the past 50 years, more than five million people have learned the Transcendental Meditation technique and are rising to enlightenment through their twice-daily practice. Maharishi has trained over 40,000 teachers, opened thousands of teaching centres, and founded hundreds of schools, colleges and universities. Maharishi Vedic Science programs are being applied in private businesses, public institutions and homes in every country.

18. SATHYA SAI BABA (1926-)

Sathya Sai Baba, born Sathyanarayana Raju on 23 Novemer 1926, is a popular South Indian guru, religious figure and educator. He is described by his devotees as an avatar, god man, spiritual teacher and miracle worker. Sathya Sai Baba's "miracles" on which he materializes vibuthi (holy ash) and small objects such as rings, necklaces and watches, have been a source of both fame and controversy—sceptics assert

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

that they are conjuring tricks, while devotees consider them evidence of divinity. Sathya Sai Baba has claimed to be the reincarnation of the great Maharashtrian saint, Sai Baba of Shirdi, whose teachings were an eclectic blend of Hindu and Muslim beliefs.

Sathya Sai Baba and his organizations support a variety of free educational institutions, hospitals, and other charitable works in India and abroad. The number of active Sathya Sai Baba adherents was estimated in 1999 to be around 6 million, although followers' estimations are far higher. Since there are no formal ties of membership, the actual figure may never be known. The Sathya Sai Organization reports that there are an estimated 1,200 Sathya Sai Baba Centres in 114 countries worldwide. In India itself, Sai Baba draws followers from predominantly upper-middle-class, urban sections of society who have the "most wealth, education and exposure to Western ideas." A cultural icon in his home country, Sai Baba has attracted presidents and prime ministers from India and beyond who have become his devotees: in 2002, he claimed to have followers in 178 countries.

Sathya Sai Baba has said that his followers do not need to give up their original religion, saying "My objective is the establishment of sanathana dharma, which believes in one God as propitiated by the founders of all religions. So none has to

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

give up his religion or deity."

Internationally, Sathya Sai Baba devotees gather daily or weekly on Sundays (and/or Thursdays) for group devotional singing (bhajans), prayer, spiritual meditation, service to the community (Seva), and to participate in "Education in Human Values" (SSEHV) also known as Sai Sunday School.

A primary aspect of Sathya Sai Baba's teachings is the spiritual benefit of darshan for his students. At that time, Sai Baba may interact with people, accept letters, materialize and distribute vibhuti (sacred ash) or call groups or individuals for interviews. Devotees consider it a great privilege to have an interview and sometimes a single person, group or family will be invited for private interview.

"There is no published formal doctrine or set of rules for the Sai Baba movement."

The principal objectives of Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation are:

1. To help the individual-
    a. To be aware of the Divinity that is inherent in him and to conduct himself accordingly;
    b. To translate into practice in daily life, divine love and perfection; and therefore
    c. To fill one's life with joy, harmony, beauty, grace, human excellence and lasting happiness;

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

2. To ensure that all human relations are governed by the principles of Sathya (Truth), Dharma (Right Conduct), Shanthi (Peace), Prema (Love) and Ahimsa (Non-violence).
3. To make devotees more sincere and dedicated in the practice of their respective religions by understanding properly the true spirit of their religion.

How are the Objectives attained?

The above-mentioned objectives are attained in the following manner:

1. By observing the four principles laid down by Bhagawan Baba, namely:
   a. There is only One religion, the religion of Love
   b. There is only One caste, the caste of humanity
   c. There is only One language, the language of the Heart
   d. There is only One God. He is omnipresent.
2. By constant remembrance of God and looking upon all creation as a manifestation of Divinity in different forms and shapes;
3. By underlining the essential unity of all religions and securing proper understanding of all religions as being based on Love;
4. By looking upon all work as service dedicated to the Divine;

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

5. By bringing to bear upon all life's problems, attitudes flowing from Divine Love, such as, understanding, compassion, tolerance, helpfulness, etc.
6. By basing all actions on Love of Divinity, fear of sin and steadfast observance of morality in society;
7. By engaging in spiritual, educational and service activities, both at the individual and community level, in an organized, systematic manner, without expecting any material reward or appreciation, but solely as a means to win God's Love and Grace.

Activities of the Organisation The Organization undertakes spiritual, educational and service activities under the inspiration and guidance of Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba through the Sri Sathya Sai Samithis+/ Centres all over the globe.

Spiritual activities include devotional singing, study circles, public lectures, seminars, meditation etc.

19. SWAMI RAM DEV

Rev. Swami Ramdev, a celibate since childhood, is well-versed in Sanskrit Grammar, Ayurved and Vedic Philosophy. A strong proponent of Indian cultural values, his practical approach to Yog, research in the field of Ayurved and services in the field of cow-breeding, have won him several thousands of followers

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

throughout India and made him a living symbol of Indian culture. His detachment from worldly happiness and devotion to social service has made him a phenomenal character in the saintly world.

He has taught in Gurukulas (traditional Indian system of education) subjects such as Ashtadhyayi, Mahabhashya, Upanishads and the six systems of Indian philosophy. Besides this, during his travels in the Himalayan mountains, he performed severe austerities in the caves of Gangotri for the realization of the self, and acquired several extraordinary capabilities.

1995, Swami Ramdev established the Divya Yog Mandir Trust with Acharya Balkrishna. Balkrishna is a physician with a degree inAyurveda.

Swamis Ramdev's TV programs and Yog camps have proved to be immensely popular. Attendance at his yog camps has been quoted as being up to 20,000 people. His TV program is broadcast in several continents including Africa, Australia, Asia, Europe and America. Executives at the TV channel carrying Swami Ramdev's program have reported immense demand for the show. Viewership is quoted as being 20 million regular viewers.

Followers of these programs have claimed relief from a variety of ailments such as blood pressure, elevated blood sugar, spondylitis, hepatitis and obesity.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

One of the factors that differentiates Swami Ramdev is his emphasis on teaching and making available the practice of Pranayama for the masses. This is different from other yoga teachers who place more emphasis on asanas (yog postures) The practice of 'praanaayaama' and 'pratyaahaara' (specific diet) for providing health, which Baba Ramdev demonstrates, is well-established in Indian traditions.

Swamiji say that the over use of fertilizers and pesticides has led to increased profits for those in trade.Swamiji has raised the issue of increased consumption of fast foods, packed foods and soft drinks by common people. He says these products are disease causing junk. Baba Ramdev blames the corrupt governance practices for the miserable conditions of the farmers. He has publicly raised the issue of Indian money stashed away illegally in Swiss bank which is estimated to be between s1-1.5 trillion USD.

Bharat Swabhiman Andolan is a mass Movement/ campaign launched by Baba Ramdev to eradicate corruption from India. The Andolan promotes protest against corruption in every government sector, and claims that the nature of this corruption is that Indian officials illegally broker deals to allow foreign companies to enter every Indian social sector and hamper the indigenous system in every sphere. Government estimations show that nearly 84 crore (840 million) people in India, which is nearly 75% of

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

the total population, are living below poverty unite standards. The campaign aims to unite all to bring about a new change.

20. SANT RAJINDER SINGH JI MAHARAJ

Sant Rajinder Singh Ji Maharaj, current head of Science of Spirituality and of the Sawan Kirpal Ruhani Mission, is internationally recognized for his work towards inner and outer peace. He was born in India and educated as a scientist in the United States.

He attended college at the Indian Institute Technology Madras, finished his studies there in 1967, and moved to the United States to get an M.S. at Illinois Institute of Technology.. He retired from Bell Labs in 1989 when the spiritual teacher Sant Darshan Singh died. He assumed Darshan's spiritual duties and so became the new leader of what is now known as Science of Spirituality. Colombia 's highest honour, the Golden Cross, (in 1992) is among the many Earthly awards the spiritual organization has been bestowed in his name.

Sant Rajinder Singh Ji Maharaj's talks have been broadcast internationally on radio and television. His publications include books in many languages and hundreds of articles on spiritual topics. His latest books, *Inner and Outer Peace through Meditation* (with a foreword by the14th Dalai Lama) and

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

Empowering Your Soul Through Meditation were recently re-released by M/s Element Books.[2]

21. A.P.J. ABDUL KALAM (1931-)

Avul Pakir Jaimulalabdeen Abdul Kalam was born onOct.15,1931 and has the unique distinction of being of the recipient of the country's top civilian awards; the Padmavibhushan in 81, Padmavibhushan in 1991 and the Bharat Ratna in 1997.

APJ ABDUL KALAM, a scientist philosopher came to be known as a protagonist of societal transformation through scientific development and innovation. Before taking over as the eleventh President of India in 2002, Dr. Kalam worked at ISRO and DRDO and as Principal Scientific Advisor to the Government of India. In 1995, Dr. Kalam articulated the vision of India becoming a developed country by 2020.

As a visiting Professor to several Universities, Dr. Kalam evinced interest in visiting schools and interacting with young children. He continued this during his Presidency and has met 1 million children so far. Children in turn responded enthusiastically and sent thousands of letters and e-mails.

Dr. Kalam was recognised as the face of 21st century India. He is also awarded the prestigious King Charles II medal for his contribution for promotion of science. He is author of 9 books. Most of his books have been bestsellers for past many years. His teachings are best

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

reflected in his books Indomitable Spirit, India 2020, Guiding Souls, your are born to Blossom.

22. KARAN SINGH (1931-)

Dr. Karan Singh was born on 5-3-1931 He became heir-apparent to the Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir. In 1949, at the age of eighteen, he was appointed Regent by Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru. He was Head of State for eighteen years as Regent, as Sadar-i-Riyasat and as Governor. In 1967, he was inducted into the Union Cabinet by MRS. Indra Gandhi as a Minister of Tourism and Civil aviation, Minister of health and family planning and later in 1979 as Minister of Education and Culture. His appointment, as India's Ambassador to the United States was warmly welcomed by both countries. He is the only former ruler of a princely state who Voluntarily surrendered his privy purse and put the entire money into the Hari-Tara Charitable Trust.

He was a warded a Ph.D. by the University of Delhi for his thesis on the Political Thought of Sri Aurobindo. He has been Chairman of Auroville Foundation Pondicherry since 2004. He has been Chancellor of Jammu & Kashmir University, President of the Authors' Guild of India and the Common wealth Society of India. He has recently become a member of the prestigious Club of Rome. He

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

is also President of ICCR. He was awarded Padma Vibhushan in 2005.

Karan Singh has written, and lectured on political science, philosophy, religion, art and culture, in India and abroad, and is recognised as one of India's outstanding thinkers and leaders. The first two volumes of his autobiography, Heir Apparent and Sadar-i-Riyasat and ESSAYS ON HINDUISIM,India and the world,Hinduisim the eternal religion have been widely acclaimed. His teachings seek for religious tolerance, universal brotherhood and peace in the world.

23. SRI SRI RAVI SHANKAR (1956-)

Sri Sri Ravi Shankar is a spiritual and humanitarian leader. He was born on May 13, 1956 in Tamil Nadu, India. He is often referred to by the double-honorific "Sri Sri", Guruji or Gurudeva .

Early life Sri Sri was born to Venkat Ratnam, a businessman in the automobile industry, and Vishalakshi. His parents named him *Shankar* since his birthday matched that of the 8th century Hindu saint, Adi Shankara. Sri Sri had received a baccalaureate's degree in science at the age of 17 from St. Joseph's College, University of Bangalore.

Shankar is a former disciple of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi. At his early age, his father delegated him to the care of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi. Shankar joined

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

Maharishi's entourage, taught the Vedic pundits at Maharishi's charities.

In an interview, Shankar said that in 1982, after a ten-day retreat into silence on the banks of the Bhadra River in Shimoga in Karnataka, India, "Sudrshana Kriya", a rhythmic breathing exercise, came to Sri Sri "like a poem, an inspiration". He added, "I learned it and started teaching it." Shankar says that every emotion has a corresponding rhythm in the breath, and believes that regulating breath could help people remove a great stress and relieve them from their suffering.It is the core component of the Art of Living Courses.

In 1982, Sri Sri established the Art of Living Foundation, an educational and humanitarian Non-Governmental Organisation that works in special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations. He founded in 1997 the International Association for Human Values (IAHV) with Headquarters at Geneva "to foster on a global scale a deeper understanding of the values that unite us as a human community."It is spread across 146 countries.

Sri Sri emphasizes breath as the link between body and mind and therefore, a tool to relax the mind. He emphasizes both meditation and service to others. According to him, science and spirituality are linked and consistent. His stated vision is to create a world

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

which is free of stress and violence through acquisition of wisdom, and his programs aim to offer practical tools to accomplish wisdom. In his view, "Truth is spherical rather than linear; so it has to be contradictory." "Anything that is spherical is always contradictory,"

[18].Honours and awards

- Culture in Balance Awards, World Culture Forum, Dresden, Germany, October, 2009.
- National Veterans Foundation Award, USA, 2007.
- Peter the Great, First Grade Award, Russian Federation, 2006.
- Mongolian Prime Minister's Award, 2006.

Books some selected books are :-

- An Intimate Note To The Sincere Seeker vol 1
- Be A Witness The Wisdom Of The Upanishads
- One God, One truth, One world
- Science of breath
- Timeless wisdom
- Wisdom for the New Millennium
- Celebrating Silence.

24. AMRITA ANANDAMAYI MA

Ma Amritananda Mayi,(Sudhamani Ma) was Born in Kollam District of Kerala on sep.27,1953. She lived a very humble and hard life as a child. She had been

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

through many spiritual experiences and was often filled with an intense longing for Lord Krishna. At the age of 22 she revealed her divine nature to the people in her village and showed them her miraculous powers. As time passed by she Became popular and not only in India but also abroad. Now she conducts her regular activities from a shrine which used to be her hut.She blesses her devotees who come in large number every day . She has an intense compassion and sympathy for the poor and has earned lot of admiration and praise for the social service done for them. She has initiated many welfare programme such as opening of orphanages, schools, houses, pension for the poor. She has a worldwide following and is revered by many in various parts of the world.Recently she has dedicated a housing project for the poor worth five hundred million rupees.This was inaugurated by the chief minister of Karnataka'mr. Yeddyurappa in Bangalore in feb, 2010. She has been awarded an hony. Doctorate Degree by the State University of Newyork.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

Notes and References

Chapter 1

1. p 25 Wisdom for the New Millenium by Sri Sri Ravi Shankar.
2. Sri Bagavat gita chapter 4
3. Thus spake prophet Muhammad published by Sri Ramakrishna Math, Chennai.
4. Thus spake the Christ –do-.
5. P 15 Essays on Hinduism by Dr. Karan Sing published by Ratna Sagar.
6. P 17 Essays on Hinduism –do-.
7. Phaedo, translator Benjamin Jowett.
8. Quoted in Emil Block's Widerholt Erdenleben. Stuttgart; 1952, p.31.
9. Letter to George Whatley, May23, 1785. The Works of Benjamin Franklin, editor, Jared Sparks. Boston: 1856, X, P.174.
10. Memoirs of Johannes Falk. Leipzig: 1832. Reprinted in Goethe-Bibliothek, Berlin:1911.
11. Moscow: Magazine, The Voice of Universal Love, 1908, No. 40, p.634.
12. San Francisco Examiner, August 28, 1928.
13. P 11 the Riddle of Life and Death by Swami Vidayananda Saraswati, Ram Lal Kapur Trust, Bahalgarh, DYTT. Sonepat, Haryana.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

14. P 85 the Essentials of Hinduism by Swami Bhaskarananda published by Sri Ramakrishna Math, Chennai.
15. Nine Upanishads by Prem Nath Chadha published by Maharshi Dayanand Bhavan, Ramlila Ground, New Delhi-110002.
16. P 179-180 of the Essentials of Hinduism by Swami Bhaskarananda.
17. from the internet.
18. P of Indomitable Spirit –do- p200.

CHAPTER 2

1. Arya Bhivinaya an English Translation of Svami Dayananda Sarasvati's Devotional Treatise by Satyananda Shastri, published by Virajaananda Vaidika Samsthaana Ghaziabad, (U.P.)
2. P 11 of The essential of Hinduism by Swami Bhaskarananda published by Sri Ramakrishna Math, Mylapore, Chennai-600 004.
3. P 12 -do-.
4. Foreword of "The Holy Vedas" by Pandit Satyakam Vidyalankar published by Clarion Books, G.T. Road, Shahdara, Delhi-110032.
5. Preface of the Essence of Vedas by Dr. B.R. Kishore published by Diamond Books, X-30 Okhla Industrial Area, Phase-II, NewDelhi-110020.
6. P 14 of The Essential of the Hinduism.
7. P 2 Essays on Hinduism by Dr. Karan Singh published Ratna Sagar Virat Bhavan, Mukherjee Nagar Commercial Complex, Delhi 110009.
8. Preface of The Essence of Vedas by Dr. B.R. Kishore.
9. P 6 of Essays on Hinduism by Dr. Karan Singh.
10. Preface of Essence of Vedas by Dr. B.R. Kishore.
11. The Vedas by Max Muller, p. 8.
12. Aryabhivinaya Edited and Translated by Satyanana

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

Shastri Published by Virajaananda Vaidika Samsthaana Ghaziabad, (U.P.), pp. 6-7.

13. Yajur Veda.
14. Rig Veda.
15. Atharva Veda.
16. Satyarth Prakash by Swami Dayanand Saraswati Published by Sarvadeshik Arya Pratinidhi Sabha 3/5 Maharishi Dayanand Bhawan, Ramlila Ground, New Delhi-110002.
17. Schopenheur a Grerman Scholar who Translated Vedas into English and German
18. P 15 of The Essentials of Hinduism by Swami Bhaskarananda Published by Sri Ramakrishna Math Mylapore, Chennai-4
19. P 52 of Eassays on Hinduism by Karan Singh Published by Ratna Sagar Virat Bhavan Mukurjee Nagar Commercial Complex , Delhi-110009.
20. P 53 to 55 – Do—
21. Ish = Isha Upanishad
22. Kath = Katha Upanishad
23. Mundaka
24. Taittariya
25. Brihadranyaka
26. Sveshvatar
27. Chhandogya
28. Brahma-Suthras
29. Prashna
30. Wisdom of the Vedas by Satyakam Vidyalankar Published by D.A.V. College Managing Committee Chitra Gupta Road, Delhi-110055

31 to 33 The Holy Vedas by Pandit Satyakam Viyalankar published by Clarion Books G.T. Road Shahdara, Delhi-110032.

34 AND 35. The essence of the Vedas by D R . K . D . D V I V E D I published by Visva Bharati Research INSTITUTE Gyanpur, Varanasi

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

CHAPTER 3

1. The Central Theme of Srimad Bhagavatam by Swami Ranganathananda published by Advaita Ashrama Kolkata.
2. Pages 43 to 52. Bhagavata a Study by Swami Harshananda Published by Ramakrishna Math Bull Temple Road Bangalore-560019.
3. Page 53 Bhagavata a Study by Swami Harshananda
4. Page 10 of Bhagavata a Study by Swami Harshananda
5. Page 9 of Bhagavata a Study by Swami Harshananda
6. Page 39 of Bhagavata a Study by Swami Harshananda
7. KRSNA The Supreme Personality of Godhead by His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada Published by The Bhaktivedanta Book Trust, Juhu, Mumbai-400049.

CHAPTER 4

1. The Bhagvad Gita by Jayadayal Goyandaka published by Gitta press, Gorakhpur(P775).
2. The Bhagvad Gita as it is by His divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada published by The Bhaktivedanta Book Trust , Juhu, Mumbai 400049. (P 849)
3. Thus spake Sri Krishna published by Sri Ramakrishna Math, Chennai-4.
4. Bhagvad Gita by O.P. Ghai published by Sterling Publishers New Delhi.
5. Essays on by Hinduism by Karan Singh.published by ratna sagar

CHAPTER 5

1. P 14 Hindu 17.1.2010 -article on money by N,Ganeshan.
2. P 1 wekkly edition 2 of Hindu – article on happiness by Geeta Padmanabhan.
3. Wisdom of Vedas by Satyakam vidaylankar published by

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

D.A.V. College Managing Committee Chitra Gupta Road, Delhi -110055.

4. Bhagvatam chapter. IX skanda
5. Chapter 14 Wisdom for the New Millennium by His Holiness Sri Sri Ravi Shankar.
6. I am a Voice without a Form written by Swami Vivekananda published by Ramakrishna Math, Hyderabad-500029.
7. Meditation by Swami Vivekananda edited by Swami Chetanananda.
8. Light of Truth by Swami Dayanand published by Sarvadeshik Arya Pratinidhi Sabha 3/5, Maharishi Dayanand Bhawan, Ramlila Ground, New Delhi-110002.
9. P 294 Light of Truth.
10. P 179 of Celebrating Silence by his holiness sri sri Ravi Shankar.
11. –do-
12. From p1 of the book of born to win by Muriel James, A Signet Book

CHAPTER 6

1. Sant Darshan published by Vivekananda Institute of Human Excellence Ramakreishna Math, Hyderaad - 500029.
2. Essays on Hinduism Karan Singh published by Ratna Sagar.
3. Internet .
4. Indomitable Spirit by APJ Abdul Kalam.
5. Religion, Science and Culture by S.Radhakrishnan.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

Bibliography

1. The Song Celestial Sir Edwin Arnold (Shrimad Bhagavad Gita)
2. Shri Bhagavad Gita Rahasya. Vols. I & II B.G. Tilak
3. Gems from the Gita M.P. Pandit
4. The Gita for Modern Man Krishna Chaitanya
5. Bhagavd Gita Maharishi Mahesh Yogi
6. Gita-The Mother M.K.Gandhi Edited by Jag Pravesh Chandra
7. The Bhagavad Gita Geeta Press
8. The Bhagavad Gita C.D. Deshmukh.
9. 'Introduction to the Commentary on the Vedas' (by Swami Dayananda Sarasvatii –Pt Ghasii Raam's English Translation).

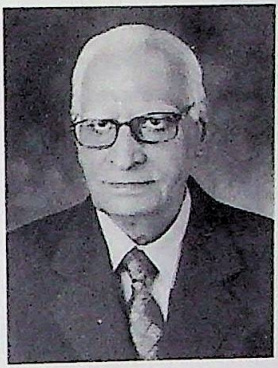
CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.

10. 'Vedic Grammar' (by Mr. A.A. Macdonell).
11. Essays on Hinduism by Karan Singh.
12. Bhakti Yoga- Swami Vivekananda
13. Essential of Hinduism-Swami Vivekananda
14. Hindu View of Life- S.Radhakrishnan
15. Hinuism at a Glance-Swami Nirvedananda
16. Hinduism –M.Monier Williams
17. Hinduism – R.C. Zaehner
18. Indian Philosophy, 2 vols.—S.Radhakrishna
19. Religion of the Hindus—K.W.Morgan (ed)
20. The Wonder That Was India—A.L. Basham
21. Vivekananda, The Yogas and other Works—Swami Nikhilananda and Frederick, Manchester.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.



Narinder Nath (born 1932), received his Masters Degree in Maths and Statistics from Punjab University, underwent training in designing of optical systems under the guidance of a German Expert for four years in ordnance factory, Dehradun, switched on to the Central Secretariat Service, worked as a Controller Imports and Exports, Export Promotion Officer (Books), Under Secretary (Book promotion) Deputy Secretary (Adult Education), as Deputy Secretary, Ministry of Law and Justice, and Executive Director, F.I.P. Trained in copyright under a fellowship offered by World Intellectual Property Organisation, Geneva in copyright offices in Washington, London, Paris and Geneva and in Computer Science from Siepe-optimation, Rome. Received training for a short period in Indian Institute of Public Administration, New Delhi. Represented Ministry of Education in International Book Fairs held at Frankfurt, London, Moscow, Singapore, Cairo, Hongkong, Sofia and did a market study of Indian books in Indonesia, Malyasia, Sri Lanka, Turkey and Beirut. Author of many papers on Export promotion, and book publishing. Assisted The Federation of Indian Publishers in the successful organisation of 20th Congress of International Publishers Association in 1992 attended by 800 publishers from 43 countries. Served as a Liaison Officer for Delegations of Authors from China, Russia and Bangladesh under the cultural exchange programes.

He is an active member of Arya Samaj and a follower of Swami Vivekananda and Sri Sri Ravi Shankar. He is an ardent lover of books, had been with the books and for the books.

CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.



"This is a unique book which enlightens us on the way to lead a purposeful and meaningful life"

Lt. General (retd) Surinder Nath"

"An inspiring and instructive book especially relevant for teachers of today who shape the future of the Nation"

Mrs. Manju Sharma,
Principal, Delhi Public School,
Bangalore (South)

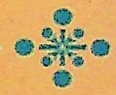
This laudable work presents a quintessence of the voluminous Hindu scriptures in a lucid and easy to understand language

SP Kumar,
Founder Arya Samaj,
M Artthali,
Bangalore



CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE

Digitized by eGangotri and Sarayu Trust.



"This is a unique book which enlightens us on the way to lead a purposeful and meaningful life"

Lt. General (retd) Surinder Nath"

"An inspiring and instructive book especially relevant for teachers of today who shape the future of the Nation"

Mrs. Manju Sharma,
Principal, Delhi Public School,
Bangalore (South)

This laudable work presents a quintessence of the voluminous Hindu scriptures in a lucid and easy to understand language

SP Kumar,
Founder Arya Samaj,
M Artthali,
Bangalore



CC-0. In Public Domain. Funding by IKS-MoE